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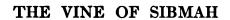






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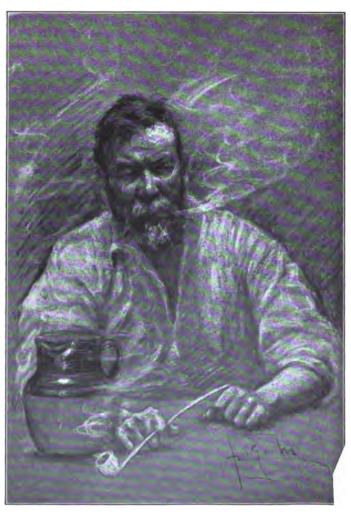
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THE MASTER OF THE COVENANT

THE VINE OF SIBMAH

A RELATION OF THE PURITANS

BY

ANDREW MACPHAIL

"O Vine of Sibmah: thy plants are gone over the sea."

ILLUSTRATED

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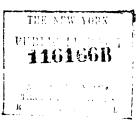
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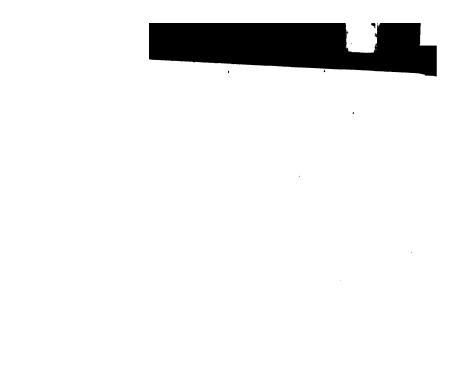
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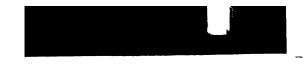




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Forthi the stile of my writinges
Fro this day forth I thenke change,
And speke of thing is noght so strange,
Which every kinde hath upon honde,
And whereupon the world mot stonde,
And hath done sithen it began,
And schal whil ther is any man;
And that is love, of which I mene
To trete, as after schal be sene.

— Confessio Amantis, I. 8.



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THE VINE OF SIBMAH

CHAPTER I

"NICHOLAS DEXTER: Stand to the bar."

The voice of the crier rang through the high-raftered court room, like the crying of a trumpet — fit summons to rouse a soldier from his meditation. I sprang up sharply, and fixed my eyes upon the bench.

The Chief Justice sat between two puisne judges, and peered at me with little eyes which shone in his swollen countenance. With his left hand he grasped the false hair which surmounted his furrowed brow, as if the better to fix his gaze; and, to support his heavy frame, he placed his elbows upon the narrow table which held his writing materials.

"Set the prisoner to the bar," he cried, with the temper of a dog.

I advanced through the throng of gazers, and long-robed men of the law, until I stood at the bar, and met my judges face to face. Silence was made.

"What is your name, and what is your quality?" the Chief Justice enquired, as he bent his brows upon me.

"You have heard my name. If you demand my quality, I am called Captain, because I was captain of Troop Sixty-Seven, Company of the Ironsides, raised in Fen Drayton, in the Hundred of Papworth, for the Eastern Association and the Army of the Parliament."

"That is a poor recommendation to bring before this court," said one of the lesser judges, with a vicious leer upon his lean face. "Where is your home?"

"No home have I had these ten years, save the wide sky or the cover of a tent, and the hard ground; and I require no recommendation before this court but my innocency."

"Have you no friend to vouch for you?"

"None, but this friend by my side." I touched the spot where the hilt of my sword should have been; but even that last refuge had been taken away, and I was naked in the courthouse of my enemies.

"Then," said the Chief Justice, "we shall provide you with a home, more secure, if not so commodious as that in which you are wont to lie." A quick smile of gratification passed over his heavy face, as if he lusted in the infliction of pain.

"I desire to be heard!"

"And to the question you shall be heard."

"I desire to know why I am here. I am an Englishman, and by the law of England I ought not to be taken, nor imprisoned, nor called in question, nor put to the answer, but according to the law of the land, which I challenge as my birthright on my own behalf, and on behalf of all who may stand in like case with me."

"Sirrah! We are here to do justice, to tell you what is law, and not you us."

"You are not here to threaten me, nor are these menaces fit for the mouth of a judge. The safety of the prisoner, which I am, stands in the indifferency of the court, and you ought not to behave yourselves as parties seeking every advantage against me."

"Cease your canting, and hear the indictment," cried the Chief Justice, his eyes in a blaze of anger, and his mouth adorned with an oath.

"Hold up your hand whilst the indictment is being read," the Clerk commanded in a tone of asperity. I held up my hand, and heard a long arraignment, partly in the Latin tongue, and partly in a language which I could better understand.

"How do you plead: Guilty or not Guilty?" the Clerk persisted.

"If I had a reading of that paper, I should better decide; for of some things I am guilty, and of others not."

"You must plead to the indictment as it stands," broke in the Recorder who occupied a seat below the bench.

"First, I demand to know why I am brought here without a warrant of law." There was some whispering on the bench, and the Sheriff was called. He stood forth with a mouth-gag and a dirty rag in his hand.

"Because your violence did not suffer it," he replied to my question, at the command of the court.

"That is a new ground of offence, and we shall enquire into it also," the Chief Justice said with satisfaction. But I resolved to speak first, and so give a true relation of what had occurred.

"But yesterday," I began, "I was walking peaceably in the Long Acre. I have a useful gift, which is a certain quickness in the apprehension of danger, and it seized me of a sudden. I turned about, and seeing a threatening face at my shoulder, I dealt a blow at the threat rather than at the face. I am obliged to admit

that the effect was the same, for the man went to the earth like a dead tree, when it is smitten by a levin-bolt."

"This was a king's officer," said the Sheriff, "and he held a warrant from the Council for your seizure."

"Why then did he not speak in good season?"

"I have already told the court that your violence did not suffer it."

"The man had a threatening air, and he was not alone. The end of the matter was that I was seized by his companions, and taken into custody. They gave me in charge of the head-borough, and this morning fetched me to judgement, where I did not think to come, till I should stand at the bar of the King of kings."

"Brawling in public and assaulting the king's officers is an indiscreet occupation for men who profess to entertain a meek and lowly spirit." The Chief Justice looked about the court for commendation of his feeble raillery.

"If I am to be put upon trial for these qualities, I fear that I shall make but an ill defence," I replied with some warmth.

"I make no doubt that, as we proceed, we shall find sufficient grounds of offence, without enquiring into the nature of the spirit which actuates you. But we are wasting time. Plead to the indictment, and say how you will be tried: By your God and Country?"

"Let me have a careful reading of that paper," I said again more mildly, "and then I can speak with knowledge."

"That you shall not have. Do you wish for the benefit of counsel?"

"It is crooked counsel which I would receive from any here, and I ask for delay to consider of my situation."

"Neither shall you have that. I have offered you counsel, and when the time comes, you need not lament that you are punished in ignorance."

"I am no lawyer," I said, in order to gain time, for things were going badly, "and my knowledge of the law is but small. Yet I have spent some leisurable hours in the reading of it, and I seem to remember having read that no freeman shall be taken but by due process of writ original, according to the old law of the land, and that if any judgements be given contrary, they are void."

With this there was a fierce interruption. The judges broke out against me, and the Sheriff advanced to restrain my speech.

"I shall provide my own counsel," I cried above the tumult, and looked about the court room, in the hope that I should discover some middling honest lawyer who might in a spirit of freakishness undertake so desperate a defence. Upon the instant a trifling young man arose in the thick of the assemblage, where he had been in consultation with a person of grave, and even noble appearance. But the court room was ill-contrived for seeing, and the face of his instructor was quickly lost in the throng. This young man, who seemed but a slight, impertinent fellow in spite of his serious garb, stood forth, and faced the bench.

"I am commissioned to undertake the defence of this brave man," he declared, "because I am persuaded that he is a ready soldier who is too lightly accused." He spoke in a chanting voice which went ill with his

ed, I thought with some show of mile man, whose very name was a stran, and demanded an answer with his clo," I answered promptly to the judged if it is an interference with the period court for a King's Counsellor to ege in defending a prisoner at the beto be informed of it in the presence of ars."

h this the young man hectored about.

neck of his gown, and cast his papers as if his dearest rights had been file ench of judges whispered together, glances towards the quarter from vected succour had come. When Mast d no reply from the bench to his ch to the Clerk.

may be that you will allow me a read ent," he cried, and seized the copy at from his hand. He cast his eye and, falling into a passion, he swell of the four winds. I had misjudged the the merry face. I had thought him.

comply with the order of the Council, that all who were involved in the recent stir should retire to their homes."

"Why then has the prisoner not retired to his home, in accordance with that order?" the Chief Justice demanded in a more moderate tone than he had yet employed.

"Captain Dexter has already informed the Court that his roof is the sky, and his bed the hard ground. If you require that he and men of his quality shall again betake themselves to the tented field, as they did once before, then I say you are not conveying to him the intention of the Council which desires only a peaceable entrance of King Charles the Second into his kingdom upon the morrow. The Council knows well that the scrapings of iron make the best swords."

The Chief Justice was not abashed at these strong words, and he pointed out clearly that the proclamation touched only those who were concerned in the strife of war, not those who were entangled in the political dissensions which followed. In conclusion he declared that they would commit me to prison, unless I found some substantial citizen to answer that I should appear when further order was to be taken concerning me.

"Then you have already condemned me," I protested hotly, "for I can find none such."

Master Walton, my counsellor, turned his eyes to the spot whence he had come. At the signal, out of the audience arose a man well past the middle of life, and of grave aspect.

"I shall answer for the safe keeping of this valiant soldier, and my condition is such that no further words are required," he said with insistence, and a manner of choking utterance in his voice. My benefactor delivered his promise in so firm a tone; and, I thought also in a manner of threatening, when he referred to his condition, that the Chief Justice required some resolution to proceed.

"In that case," he declared, "we shall require a bond, seeing that Captain Dexter has confessed that he lacks friends and habitation."

"Captain Dexter I venture to charge with error.' I am his friend. My house is his abode. I have already said that there is no further need of words, but I am willing to give a moderate bond." The Chief Justice quickly assumed an appearance of good nature, and shifted his ground.

"We shall require no undertaking in money. The word of an Alderman is sufficient bond," he declared with an assumption of great magnanimity.

I thought my bondsman must have been gratified with this testimonial to his quality, but it fell out otherwise. He was visibly annoyed, and the lawyer ran to him to calm his irritation.

And so, with due formality, I was committed to the care of this worthy citizen, as if I were a piece of merchandise from Goa. Whilst the necessary forms were being prepared, the judges left the bench in no cheerful mood, and I took the occasion to desire of the Sheriff that he should give back my sword. He handed the weapon to me with some respect; and, as I set it in its accustomed place, my spirits rose still higher.

My adroit and resolute counsellor who had spoken so handsomely for me came to the bar, and took my hand. I thanked him properly for his gracious act, and desired him to present me to his noble friend, and mine also, as he had proved himself to be. By this time we had reached the door which divided the melancholy court of justice from the free air and the light of the sun. The Alderman approached us, and as he came near I was much enamoured of his quality, for he was attired in a black cloth suit trimmed with scarlet, with a velvet lined cloak, and a new beaver, all very imposing.

• Even yet I was unaware who was this stranger, to whom I was indebted for so agreeable a service; and, as he came into the full light, he observed the wonder in my face.

"Have you then forgotten the matter of Southam Heath," he enquired with a flame of reminiscence in his eyes, "in which you executed justice upon those men who would have robbed me of my treasure, had not your arrival prevented it?"

"I am obliged to confess that I do not remember any such service, seeing that the hanging of one highwayman, more or less, was of small account in those days."

"It is as gallant of you as it were base of me to forget such a service, and I have long sought occasion for its acknowledgement. Do you not remember Gilbert Sherwyn?"

With the mention of his name the whole occasion leaped to my mind with all its incidents — the moon-lit night, the narrow hedged lane, the turmoil of horses and men, and the sleeping child which nestled in my arms during that long midnight ride.

By this time we had gained the open air, and the Alderman and myself merited some notice from a group of idlers which surrounded us. Master Walton protested that he had business in hand, and must leave us. He made offer of his services, if at any future time they should be required, a contingency which he thought not unlikely. Then he went on his way with an excess of alacrity, as if he were bound for a tavern. Alderman Sherwyn also explained that he had some affairs in the City, which demanded his attention, as it was now high noon.

"I intend," he said in an agitated way "to make something of this chance meeting in the court, where I was on business with my counsellor, and will have you at my house. In the meantime you may desire to consult with your friends." As he uttered this generous sentiment, he cast a swift glance at my foul and disordered dress, though assuming not to notice it.

"By this time to-morrow," he continued, "or a little later, I shall send for you, if you will signify to me where you may be found," and I gave him the name of Mother Lam's hostelry in Jewin Street, where I was in the habit of consorting with my companions. I protested, however, that he need not seek me out, and that I should come to him willingly, if he would indicate where he lived, as I knew the city well enough for that. He mentioned that his house was in Lombard Street, and then made a grave bow which consorted ill with his restless eyes. He turned to go, and then stopped. He started again, and went with rapid steps, swinging his cane, and rapping smartly at every post which stood by the way.

CHAPTER II

WHEN Alderman Sherwyn and his counsellor left me, I stood in the street, an idle spectator, until I heard the dull grumble of the drums. I made my way into the Strand, and found that thoroughfare full of soldiers on foot, crying for a free Parliament and money. They were in good plight, stout officers and hardy men, and the people gave them drink.

Then came the noise of trumpets, and the ground was shaken with the trampling of horses. My lord Monck rode at the head, and the soldiers of the Commonwealth were at last concentrating upon London, that their leaders might take thought for the direction of public affairs. All was a labyrinth: foot-soldiers beating back the horse, no order of lines nor sense in the sounds of command; and again, men laying down their muskets and their pikes. Suddenly the strife ceased, and all parties seemed to be of the same mind. The officers drank a health to the king in the open, and cried, "God save His Majesty."

Over against the crowd was a house of entertainment, the Swan with Two Necks, and out of it emerged a good confluence of gentlemen. They solicited the officers with kind words, and invited all to enter freely, and take food. With the smell of horses, and the tumult of men, I felt myself an officer again, and made bold to enter. Besides, I was hunger-bitten, and I had

that thumping against my leg-bone, which would find me a passage out, if violence were offered, or the way were barred.

I went in at the door, and mounted a stairway which conducted me to a large upper room with heavy-beamed ceiling, and wainscotted with oaken panels, all blackened with age, and the smoke of many an unholy revel. It was Ruffian's Hall, and smelled of tobacco, worse than hell of brimstone. Several gamesters were sitting at twelve penny *In and In*, and they were exercising themselves with more than the ordinary cursing and swearing of soldiers. I knew that it was only the devil which was at work, so I gave the matter no further thought, but fell to the business before me; for my appetite was like a sharp-set saw.

I took a seat at the end of a long table which was set forth with an excellent meal, a leg of mutton, a loin of veal, dishes of fowls and marrow bones, a great tart and a cheese. In the due course of time a satisfactory dinner was accomplished; and, as I was not alone in the occupation, my presence passed unnoticed. At the opposite end of the table one of the gamesters had taken his place, and his companions called him Kirke. As the tapster passed, I asked for a pint of ale, and he went upon the errand.

"Fetch me a quart of ale," cried Kirke. Both dishes were brought. I drained the pot at a draught. Kirke did likewise with his, thus disclosing his immoderate affection for drink.

"Fetch me another pint," I ordered, and Kirke repeated his command. I sought to withdraw from this unequal contest by toying with the draught of liquor; but Kirke arose and offered a health to the king. At the same time he leaned forward in his ungainly length, and presented to me his commodious dish which was a brown bowl tipped with silver, overflowing with colour and foam. He said nothing, but only glared at me with his eyes.

"I am here to eat," said I, "not to drink. I was bidden to enter this house of restauration for men of condition, and did not expect to find a smoke-hole haunted by the huffs and hectors of the town." Kirke belched out an oath; and, with a rattle of iron, he had his sword in his hand.

"What do you here in the company of gentlemen?" he cried. "Betake yourself to the company of your crop-eared companions."

"Cursings do not make a gentleman," I said quietly enough, and kept my seat.

"Nor does praying make a saint."

"Your speech betrays that you are no saint. Your conduct proves that you are not a gentleman."

"Defend yourself," he cried, his face blazing with a mad love of glory, and swelling himself till I thought he would burst a button of his coat.

"I need no defence against this cursed speaking, save that I should put tow in my ears. It is you who should seek protection against your empty, carnal mind."

"You come amongst soldiers. I offer you a soldier's privilege."

"You call yourself a soldier. Steel by your side and iron in your heels make neither a soldier nor a man of sense."

"Neither does blood upon your hands, nor regicide upon your soul," he said, and showed his teeth.

"My country I place above any king. This empty cry of 'king,' 'king,' is a catchword to call together silly young men."

"You are asked to fight, and you preach instead."

"If I preach, it is because preaching is what you most need. Yet I do not deny that a little blood-letting would purge your system from liquors and other impurities." I arose from my seat.

"The day of hypocrites is gone by," he cried, in a clamorous voice, as he loosened his coat.

This unfortunate argument bred some confusion in the room, and I feared it might end in disorder. Yet, I contrived to get the wall at my back, and continued to speak my mind, though my assailant's weapon was in the air.

"We allow seven years to a maker of shoes," I said in his face, for I also had discoursed myself into a passion. "We give five to a tailor, wherein to learn his trade. Shall we allow less to a soldier? When you have served six years more, and are willing to prove yourself, then you may seek me out."

"Then it is in the kennel I must seek you, where the footmen will presently pitch you." I had made no motion to draw, but I knew where was the handle of my weapon, if Kirke should press me too close.

"Draw," cried several officers in one voice.

It was the sword with the straight damascened blade and the well-guarded hilt, which I drew. The vigour and rapidity of the movement comported so ill with the modesty of my bearing, and the gravity of my speech, that Kirke fell back a pace. I brought the flat of my weapon upon his head, and with a fine drawing stroke let him feel the edge across his hairy scalp. The blood flowed, and the evil spirit was let loose in my heart. I believe I would have thrust him through, had not three of his companions borne him backwards, and a gentle hand been laid upon my arm.

The flame died down. An officer of the king stood before me with kindliness in his eyes. In that instant, when I had need of friends to save me from my own violence, I noted him well, tall and fine in his camelette cloak, and gold buttons — so well that I should know him again, if I were to meet him in the wilderness of the New World.

"If you had slain that braggart Kirke," said the officer of the king, "the fault was his own. I protest that this offer of entertainment was a stratagem which was well meant. We would win those whom we cannot compel. I beseech you to depart in peace."

The confusion was again so great that I could not make my voice heard, and I suffered myself to be led to the door by my companion who gave me his hand and a look from his gentle eyes, when we parted. As I descended the thronged stairway, I was filled with wonder that, twice in the same day, I should have been succoured by men who were strangers, and yet friends.

Once more I was in the street. The evening was closing in. "God save His Majesty!" filled the air. Bow bells and the bells of all the churches were ringing. Fleet Street was ablaze with bonfires; and from the Strand Bridge I could see the whole distance from Temple Bar to St. Dunstan's in a glare of light. The common joy was everywhere. The streets were swarming with boors, and echoing with rude cries, so that an iron-mill

would hardly have drowned the noise. In the alleys were shoals of gamblers, kidnappers and decoys, and others deserving of the generic name of rooks. Every street corner was a nursery for Newgate; and I looked with amazement that so foul a brood should spring up, when all wholesome restraint was gone.

I was taking my way towards Mother Lam's in Jewin Street, but the crowd had grown so big, I was obliged to come to a halt at a point where the butchers had erected booths. They were ringing peals by clashing their great knives together, and everywhere there was roasting and drinking. One fellow, observing me, cast his cap in the air.

"Here is a Roundhead," he cried; "he can speak with his nose, whilst he eats with his mouth. Let the Roundhead pray." A fellow, still more lewd, was turning a spit before a fire, which threw off fragrance from a rump of smoking meat.

"At last is an end to lean meat, lean men, and lean laughter. If the Roundhead pray, the roast will be burned on the spit, the white broth boiled dry, and the baked meats scorched to a cinder. I have done with praying: now I am for eating;" and he completed his argument with scoffs and jests.

"Good friend," said I, "your time for praying will be when you come to Tyburn, and you are making excellent progress thither."

"Hanging is a delicate subject for conversation in these times," was his last retort, and I agreed in my heart that it was so.

When I reached Mother Lam's it was well within the night; yet the good woman bade me welcome, and at the same time remarked my disordered dress, and downcast looks.

"To-day I have seen the end of all things but evil," I said by way of explanation.

"There is no evil so long as meat and drink remain in the house. It is lack of these, which ails you." With this assurance, she busied herself drawing liquor, and procuring food. Mother Lam was a discreet woman, in spite of her voluble tongue, and whilst she was so engaged, I sought intelligence of my friends.

"None come here," she said, "save Sir Harry Vane, and a few who have the design to pass over seas. Indeed, he is expected shortly to arrive, and you would best occupy the time in refreshing yourself."

I made my evening meal from half a hen which she had set upon the table, along with suitable garnishings, such as a humble liquor in a pewter pot, a salad dressed after the manner which I had learned in France, and cheese which was redolent with memories of the days in which, during my youth, I had studied the law at Leyden.

When this nimble collation was finished, I seated myself to the best advantage I could, and soon fell into a condition of content. I had done what I could. Cromwell was dead, and my troop was disbanded. Hugh Cornish and many of my old troopers had gone abroad into a less disciplined service; or, as I had heard, they had taken to the high seas in search of adventure, or it might be to plunder the Spaniard.

All that remained for me was to follow them, and it was upon that subject I would consult with

Harry Vane, for he had spent six years of his youth in New England. There was no congenial service in the Low Countries, and I had no taste for wandering over the seas. No one was more competent to advise me than Harry Vane, for he had the greatest ability of mind, the clearest integrity, and the firmest temper of all the men whom I had known. Besides, he had some knowledge of my past services, and appreciated only too fully the evil circumstances in which we all were placed.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTLY there was a knocking at the door, and Mother Lam ran with her tireless old feet to answer the summons. There were some whispered words, and it was Harry Vane who entered.

"Captain Dexter," he began, without salutation, "I am this day voted out of Parliament, and must retire to my house in Raby, where I am to remain till further order is taken. Your case is better than mine; for though you were in the shock of battle, you did not meddle with politics or public affairs."

"I am afraid," said I, with what cheerfulness I could, "that many of us will be retiring to a less comfortable, if more secure abode than Raby, as the judge remarked in the court this morning. Last night I spent in the Newgate, and I cannot boast of the entertainment which it offers."

"How then did you escape?" cried Sir Harry, with wonder in his face, and an uplifting of the hands. "I would learn of so great a mercy, for mercies few enough are to be vouchsafed to us."

"If I were to relate the whole matter to you, — how a friend whom I had acquired ten years ago stood up for me, — the night would not be long enough for the recital. Besides, I have always found that even to me, who am a soldier, the chance adventures of soldiers cause weariness in the telling."

"That is because they are filled with strange improbable lies, but I can trust to you for truth and sobriety." I took a sup from the beaker which stood at my elbow. Sir Harry laid aside his cloak and hat, and disposed himself for a comfortable evening.

"I warn you," said I, "that my relation will take you into the turmoil of the camp, into the cold field, and the open highway, and will involve mention of the Lord General himself."

"All this I can well endure—even the name of Cromwell, though I did fall at cross purposes with him—for it will wean away my thoughts from our present unhappy case."

"You will remember," I began, "that Troop Sixty-Seven had once been Cromwell's own. For the love which he bore to me its captain, and the regard which he had for his old command, he always thrust it like a wedge where the passage was hardest, or hurled it like a bolt, when the return was of less importance than the advance. When it was not a forlorn, it was a commanded troop, hurrying here and there, to strike, to seize, or fall back for support when the demand for support became too urgent."

"I fear," said Sir Harry, "that the long night will be consumed, if you loose your mind upon the prowess of your old command. When did this action happen which concerned your freedom this day from the prison and the court?"

"It happened after the war was over, and the Northern invaders had finally found an end to their troubles; when Charles the Second had begun his long flight which is only to-morrow at an end."

"But this is the commonplace of history, and I am not unacquainted with the main course of events. It might be wise if you were to confine yourself within a narrower compass."

"Well." I continued with a new resolve to contract my speech, "it was the month of November, before we were again to join the main body of the army. All day the rain had been falling in wild showers with wind. It was growing dusky, the darkness of evening coming on to increase the gloom. The journey was one of much labour. A weak bit of moon was rising, but it was soon drowned in thick clouds of mist. There was no needless noise beyond the champ of a bit, the rattle of a chain, or it might be the clank of a scabbard against the iron of a stirrup. The sturdy horses tramped and splashed over the dropsical ground, but there was small hope that we should discover dry tents before the night fell. We were still abroad with little promise of warmth or other comfort, when two of my troopers came hurrying back to say that they had been in touch with a body of horse. My men drew into closer order of their own I sent forward a small patrol to gain knowmotion. ledge of the size and disposition of this force, whilst we waited, careless that the rain ran in at our necks, and vented itself through our hose and breeches." My companion rapped smartly upon the table with the flat of his small-sword.

"This is but a cheerless affair," said he; and, turning to Mother Lam who had entered promptly upon the summons, for she was a woman of active carriage, he bade her fetch a dish of liquor, and dry fuel for the fire.

"Now," said Harry Vane, as the blaze rose afresh in

the wide chimney, and a warm steam went up from the table, "that I am well equipped against your dismal rain and cold; what account did your troopers bring?"

"They reported that the horse was composed of two regiments of our own cavalry, commanded by the Lord General Cromwell, and that we were instantly expected. We held our way; and, a few scattered horsemen coming in contact with our advance, I rode through them to the front, to present an account of my duty to my General. Out of the darkness Cromwell himself emerged, his great cloak enveloping him like a darker shadow, his shoulders bowed, as if he bore a heavy burden, and bore it alone. I drew rein. The General removed his hat, lifting it slowly by the broad curling brim, and commanded me to advance. As I drew up he said: 'Captain Dexter, I have noticed your capacity. I would advise with you. The best counsellor is he who first mounts the enemy's walls.'"

"I had thought the best counsellor was he who contrived your escape from the law. Did Oliver speak upon that subject?"

"He talked of matters which have since become the commonplace of history," I said, with some show of pride.

"I did but jest — a feeble jest," he admitted. "Pray continue in your own way. Your joinery of words is skilful."

"The General recited to me the contents of a paper which he had received that day from the Council, dealing with the scandal of highwaymen in public places."

"It was myself who wrote the memorial," said Harry Vane, with a new show of interest; and I was encouraged to proceed by the urgency in his eyes.

"I said to the General that I believed I could undertake the regulation of the evil. He pulled up his horse; and turning to me he recited in a hard, official way: 'I commission for you your own troop, and I commend to you a quality of rope which comes out of Ireland. It is light, strong, and pliable. And do you use your utmost endeavour that your troopers continue to be of good life and conversation. Exert yourself that the misguided men to whom you do justice shall make a becoming end. Be prompt and thorough. It is God's work. I wish you a good-night."

"You are now where you should have begun," said Sir Harry. "Yet I have an obstinacy to know how you escaped from the power of the law—and we are not misspending the time." My only fear was that my companion would take his candle, and mount to his bed, for I was overcome by a great desire to talk, and so I affected to disregard his impatience.

"When the General dismissed me I returned to my troop, my heart large with my new commission. By daylight the following morning I was astir, and the assembly was sounded. Troop Sixty-Seven fell into order. There was no need of an inspection, for the penalty for a galled withers, a chafed strap, or a broken buckle, was heavy — expulsion into another company.

So we rode out in brave array, and those hands incased in leather, which held the bridle-chains, were heavy hands, when justice was to be done. Our setting forward was somewhat before seven, the morning promising a clear day. When the sun was well up, we had drawn away from the main body, and entered a quiet wood. There we dismounted. I broke up the troop into units

of about twelve m & each, and appointed those who were to be the leaders.

"To myself I reserved the Great South Road, and tookwith me Hugh Cornish, and his two inseparable companions, Christopher Lea and Richard Thorpe, besides a trusty lad who was well tried though young. But I need not pause here to relate the varying degrees of success, which attended the operations of each body of horsemen."

"No," my companion assented, with great vigour.

"Save to mention that their efforts resulted in what is known in the annals of the Road as the 'Great Hanging,'" I added with some asperity in my voice.

A thin smile of amusement flitted over my companion's sombre visage.

"We spent a day in the Council," he admitted, "discoursing of your gipsy tricks. If this was the occasion when you, and your troopers, set out upon a night journey like ravishing rogues in a tempting coach, I could well endure hearing of it."

"You have rightly judged," said I with shame in my face; "but when force does not avail, we must then resort to stratagem."

"Cromwell was merry over it," my companion assured me; "but he did not commit all the facts to us." With this encouragement I proceeded:

"That notorious tavern, the Green Man, on Southam Heath, was the point of my attack. Thither I rode an hour within the evening, in a garb and fashion which Rupert himself could not have excelled. Something before midnight I continued my journey with coach and driver, which the landlord supplied. It was not



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long before a group of horsemen appeared upon the crest of a hill against the moon. I professed alarm. The driver lashed his horses into a gallop, — and contrived to overset the coach. The horsemen were upon us, but it was Hugh Cornish who led them. The fine clothes which I wore were as irritating as a shirt which I once purchased in Scotland, so I cast them aside, and was quickly in my own leathern breeches, boots, and doublet, and felt once more like an honest man."

"This is not without interest," Sir Harry admitted when I had arrived at this point in my narrative. "You keep your facts and your words in close relation." Encouraged by this commendation I continued:

"The driver stood as if he had the green sickness. We bound him securely; and, thrusting a hard rolled glove in his mouth, we deposited him in a dry ditch with quick sloping sides. The coach was set up behind its proper pair of horses. Next went two and two of our own with one rider to a pair, a trooper upon the box, and Hugh Cornish inside with me. The moon was shining brightly, but thick woods grew upon each side of the way, and the road was full of holes."

"This is quite tolerable," said Sir Harry. "You put your words upon one side, your facts upon the other, and so keep the balance even. Nothing is wanting or wasted."

"Suddenly there were sounds ahead, a shout and a cry, but silence fell quickly. Christopher Lea, who acted the part of driver, was expert enough to mire the coach. Four horsemen leaped through the hedge with a rattle of pistols; but the trooper on the box had sprung along the backs of the wheelers to his horse,

Cornish scrambled up, and I was quickly on my own. The harmless coach-horses were changed to a cavalcade before the highwaymen were upon us. There was a flashing of fire, a crash of iron; and horses and men came tumbling down. We were the first upon our feet; and before the marauders could extricate themselves, they were bound hand and foot with small chains."

"And did these fellows display such repentance that they went bonds for you?" my listener enquired patiently; but he stirred uneasily, and recalled me to my present business.

"I can ill brook interruption," I said. "The thing is hard enough to tell as it is. I rode along the lane to investigate the cause of the earlier outcry; and, in a damp hollow, I found a man stricken down, and weeping over him as if her little heart would break was a maiden not above five or seven years old. Their horses were killed, and the driver lay dead in the midst. I leaped to the ground, and spoke kindly to the child; but she only wept the more, till I gathered her in my arms, and then she grew strangely quiet. I set the child down gently; and, going to the man, I seized him by the shoulders, and turning up his face to the moon I found he was yet alive. Fetching water in my back-piece from a brook I dashed it in his face, and with the aid of some stronger waters which I had in my bottle, he was soon restored."

"This will do very well," my companion commended me, "a plain statement without embroidery of words."

"I set the traveller upon my spare beast, and he rode heavily, so I supported him as well as I could. He had the air of a merchant venturer newly come from foreign parts, and as he was in no mood to be questioned,

we passed the time in silence, save when he enquired for the maiden and his box, both of which I assured him I held safe; for I bore the child at my saddle-bow, her moonlit hair glowing like a halo about the sweet face. She stretched forth two tired arms, and twined them like tendrils around my neck. The sense of that gentle restraint has never left me. I cast aside my breast-piece, that she might rest easily; and that was the first occasion upon which I was ever disarmed," I concluded proudly.

"And was this the man who went bonds for you to-day?" cried Sir Harry.

"This was the man. His name is Gilbert Sherwyn; but I am not thinking of him. I am thinking of his sweet child, and I am like to see her on the morrow."

"This child excites an incredible interest in my mind, also," Harry Vane admitted. "The thought of children makes me loath to leave this world."

"And in mine too. This morning, when her father succoured me from the law, and disclosed himself," I protested, "my heart leaped up at the remembrance of that young face."

"Strange that a merchant should take his daughter upon so long and doubtful a journey," he reflected with his usual insight into affairs.

"That thought occurred to me also, for the man admitted that he had been absent from his own country for more than thirty months."

"How did the child conduct herself towards her guardian?" he enquired.

"I saw little of them together. When we reached the Green Man, I had some business to transact with

the landlord and his friends. But one of them being a kind of lawyer insisted upon the formality of making a speech. I left the execution of justice to my men, and joined the merchant within. The maiden was sleeping overhead, and although the thing was accomplished quietly, her gentle sense may have perceived that a work of justice was being done, or she may have felt the successive shocks upon the rafters. At any rate she uttered a cry of fear. We mounted the steps to ascertain the cause, and entered the room together. The little child was half roused from sleep, her arms cast all abroad, and a look of wonderment upon her pretty face.

"'Beatrix,'" the merchant called to her.

"'I am not Beatrix,' said the sleepy little one, and the tired head fell upon the pillows. In the morning as the merchant prepared to depart, the maiden lifted her face to be kissed, and said: 'Some day I shall kiss you again.'"

It may have been the liquor in my head, but now I had no thought for Sir Henry Vane, nor his troubles, nor of anything which he might tell me of New England, nor of my own evil case — under bonds to a stranger, my enemies in the saddle, and I a straggler at the rear. My sole interest was in this little child who was now no longer a child; for in one evening she had grown to be a woman, inasmuch as these things had happened more than ten years before.

Sir Harry observed that I was wrought upon. The fire had fallen low. The night was far spent and chill. We took our candles, and went silently to bed.

CHAPTER IV

In the morning it was late when I arose. Mother Lam came to inform me that Sir Harry Vane had gone abroad, but was expected to return shortly. In the meantime she prepared food, and as I was about to sit to the table, he came in with a heavy air.

"Everything is like to miscarry," he said, with complete abstraction of interest, as he took a seat at the opposite side of the table. "The king will enter London to-day, and as the Council is certain of the temper of the people, there will be no more leniency."

"Can we not fly to New England?" I asked too quickly for I had forgotten my bonds.

"New England is a commodious land," he replied, I thought, with some reserve.

"Do you not estimate that we could lead a peaceable life, and gain some exercise there? You have knowledge of those communities."

"True, I went over there in the Abigail. I was a member in Boston for six years, and was Governor of all the settlements in the Massachusetts."

"And did you not find it a congenial company?"

"We had troubles there, as elsewhere, and I was a sharer in them."

"I have heard that the Indians and the Dutch are a sore trial."

"Those exiles have worse distractions within them-

selves. The occasion of my own departure was a dissension which arose over the relation of sanctification to justification, and with it was bound up the assurance of salvation."

"These seem to me but empty questions," I said. "I have no skill in such high matters, but I believe we could accomplish something towards love and harmony."

"You might," he admitted doubtfully, "apply some balm before the wound becomes incurable. For my-self I was but a thorn in their side."

"This passes all which I could guess; but, if I were free, could we not go over, and help ourselves and them?"

"There are various reasons why we cannot," he replied with his judicial air. "You are under bonds to appear before the court, when called upon. I shall not be permitted to leave my house in Raby after this day. I have made my bed and must lie upon it. As for you, if you can free yourself from your present entanglement, you might find some sparks in New England, which I helped to kindle; and I charge you to fan them into a living flame."

"There is no other door open," said I; "and if I can but enter in I shall remember your trust in me."

Sir Harry Vane arose from the table. At the same moment Mother Lam entered to announce that Master Walton was below, and desired to see him.

"That is the same," I cried, "who spoke for me in the court."

"Then you are not strangers, and you are like to be friends," he said.

"It may be that he comes from Alderman Sherwyn to say that I must discharge him from his bond."

"I think not. I rather suspect he comes on business from the Massachusetts Company. There is a project on foot to send out a considerable emigration. But this does not concern you," he said, and added wearily, "nor me, either. You cannot go, and I would not go, even if I could."

The young man entered and saluted Sir Harry briskly. He professed no surprise in seeing me, and made light of the service which he had rendered, when I thanked him a second time.

"Time presses, Sir Harry," he cried. "We are none too soon. A convoy has been found. You must proceed, at once and secretly, to Delfshaven."

"Good friend," said Harry Vane, "I give you thanks; but this is not for me."

"I can manage your going hence with perfect ease," cried Master Walton in amazement that anyone should question his capacity.

"It is not that. I was in the wrong. Religion is an affair of the heart. I took a sword in my hand, and it is but right that I should perish by the sword. I boast myself that I am a Puritan: but puritanism is a thing of the spirit. Now the victor sings: the vanquished prays. Daily I put up the cry: 'Praised be the Lord for our sister the death of the body.'"

"I am a soldier," I declared fervently. "Neither do I fear death, and we shall meet it, if it come."

"You are a soldier," he said mournfully. "You do not fear death, yet you do not love it. You are but young, and have not earned the right. It remains for you to work out your own way." He raised his hand as if in benediction; and this Eldest Son of Religion went

out to his willing, though unrighteous, death on the Tower Hill.

When Sir Harry left us, Master Walton and I looked into each other's eyes; for this doctrine was new to me, and I said as much.

"This is a form of folly which passes my understanding also," the lawyer assented.

"This appears to be a deep matter. It may pass our understanding, and yet be true."

"Laying aside what is beyond our knowledge, let us apply the facts to your own case which is little more happy than that of Harry Vane."

"His decision rests with himself. Mine does not lie with me. I am bondsman to Alderman Sherwyn."

"The Alderman merely pledged his word," the lawyer urged.

"And that makes my case the worse. No hand was ever ensnared by touching mine. I would go down into the silence rather than that any man should suffer in his honour because of me — even with his own consent."

"You are harder to deal with than Harry Vane." Master Walton arose, and paced the room, contracting his brows after the manner of a man who is at his wit's end.

"I shall disclose the whole matter to you," he said at length when he had mastered his astonishment. "Such a contingency as this has been expected, and certain persons who are favourable to your cause, as they understand it, and to the Massachusetts Company, have taken measures for sending to New England all whose further residence here under the new order of things is fraught with danger to themselves. The difficulties are great, for the ports are watched; but suddenly a convoy has appeared, which is in every way suitable, and willing to meet opposition with force."

"This may prove to be a way out for me," I said on the instant. "I have no fixed intention to sit still and suffer. If I may not depart, I may join in assisting those who can legitimately go, and several occasions may arise. Tell me further of this convoy."

"The master of it is one Phineas Pratt."

"Of the Covenant?"

"Of the New Covenant."

"Then you have a competent convoy," I cried, smiting my hand upon my hilt.

"What can you know of Phineas Pratt, or his New Covenant, seeing that he has not appeared in these waters this dozen years? To all of your friends he is like one risen from the dead."

Memories of my youth were thick upon me. The name of Phineas Pratt, and of the *Covenant*, brought to my mind that hour when Charles the First called to his own for aid, the same hour when public affairs cried aloud for succour, and, in answer to the double summons, friends of the king, and friends of the people, came hurrying from foreign parts—grizzled veterans from the Dutch wars, who were resolute to lose their lives, ere England should suffer the ills which they had witnessed in prelatical countries; and men of name and place, true cavaliers who rallied to the help of their order.

I say — of my youth — for at that time I was living, a quiet boy, in Leyden, dreaming away my days on its canals and moats, in its broad streets and lifeless squares. To me also the summons came, and it was then, boy as

I was, that I cast in my lot with those zealous men who withstood the house of Stuart.

"What of this Phineas Pratt?" cried the lawyer with irritation at my silence and reflection. "My information is scanty; for everyone whom I ask seems to fall forthwith into a melancholy, and discants merely upon the man's competency, without revealing anything of the matter."

"You are too young to understand," I said earnestly, for the carnage of old battles rose before my mind.

"Young! These ten years I have practised in every court in the nation, and I commenced when I was but three and twenty."

"Seven years before that I was a soldier, and these ten years since besides. True, I am no older than you, but age comes with experience, not with years."

"But what have your years to do with Phineas Pratt?"

"They have this to do. When you were a boy in school, and I had not yet had a serious horse between my knees, this Phineas Pratt was a finished commander at sea, and competent to inspire terror into the stout heart of Rupert."

"Is this within your own knowledge, or is it hearsay?"

"I witnessed it myself. When the war broke out, now eighteen years ago, I was in Leyden, and as all lines of travel converged towards the Hague, I found myself in its port of Scheveningen seeking transport home. The Colster was ready to sail for Scarborough, and the master was contracted to carry over Prince Rupert and his followers. He was not averse to a private venture, and gave me passage, stipulating only that I should assume the garb of a ship's boy for the voyage. With

a fair wind, and a falling tide, we were soon at sea, and before night we were heading well up to Scarborough on the English coast."

"Your relation is not without interest," the lawyer admitted. "You have a nice perception of the meaning of words."

"It is no merit of mine," I protested modestly. "My story tells itself;" but I proceeded with more confidence.

"At nightfall I was aroused by a wild trampling of feet overhead, and I went above. The Prince, with a mariner's cap upon his head, was darting about like a will-o'-the-wisp, giving orders that the guns should be run out, and protesting fiercely that he would not be searched. A Parliament ship was beating up, but when he saw our preparations he fell away. Next a consort was descried coming round the head with a great furrow of shining foam at her prow. The master of the Colster cried out orders which were strange to me. His formation shifted, and he sped into the darkness which was then gathering close. The Prince rushed upon him with a naked sword in his hand, and upbraidings in his mouth, cursing him for a coward and a fool. The master said quietly enough, 'That ship is the Covenant: her captain is Phineas Pratt. If he catch us, he will tear our sides like a dog of the sea.' The Prince moderated his anger, and bowing to the seaman, he said: 'I give you my thanks.""

"This Phineas Pratt grows in interest," said the little lawyer. "At times, chiefly when I have taken liquor, I am seized with regret that I did not qualify myself for a soldier." Upon the word he called for Mother Lam, and demanded refreshments which she

brought with much good humour, and had light speech 'in return.

"I once came near to being a lawyer myself," I said, "but I have never rebelled at the fate which prevented it."

"If you were to cut as good a figure before the bench as you did yesterday at the bar, I can promise you advancement in the calling."

"Soldiers or lawyers," put in Mother Lam, "'tis one to me: slitting throats or picking pockets are both productive of thirst."

Master Walton seated himself at the table with his dish before him in the place which Sir Harry Vane had left, and assumed to look fierce.

"Now am I a soldier," he cried, "I would hear more of this Phineas Pratt."

"These things are not to be related for your amusement," said I.

"The difference between a lawyer and a soldier is that a lawyer can carry two things in his head at once, and give sign of neither in his face."

"I think I have observed this emptiness of countenance."

"I have in my pocket, if not in my face, a commission from the Massachusetts Company to procure convoy for them. It was upon that business I came to consult with Harry Vane, but his absurdity about the death of the body prevented it. Can you tell me if this Phineas Pratt is a man to be trusted? From the best information which I can get he is more of a pirate than a puritan; though, of course, a man may be a pirate and a puritan too."

"My best answer to that is that the Lord General Cromwell trusted him."

"I should be disposed to accept that recommendation. But can you tell me of any specific service in which he was engaged; I can find record of none."

"That I cannot, for Cromwell was a man who ill brooked being questioned; but it was an affair of great secrecy and danger."

"Can you not relate to me the circumstance as it occurred between you? It may be that I can gather some matter which escaped you."

"It is a long time since; but the General sent for me, and sought my advice upon a design by sea, which he had in mind."

"Why did he not send for his geographers, or some one competent to advise him?"

"We were in the field at the time, and he knew that I had spent four years of my boyhood in an adventure of travel abroad, and so was likely to have knowledge of foreign parts."

"But what were you doing in foreign parts?" This lawyer was never done asking questions of which none but himself knew the purport. I had nothing to conceal, so I let him have his way,

"At the death of my father I was left under guardians, and in my twelfth year they placed me at Cambridge. There I was seasoned with grace under the ministry of a profitable preacher. It was their plot that, in time, I should acquire some tincture of the law; but even at that early age, with the new light which I had acquired, I saw the incredible wickedness of lawyers, their oppression of the fatherless, their con-

tention and cosenage. This impression was confirmed many years afterwards when I saw that foul monster, a Chancery Bill, which I have by me, and never read to this day — forty pages of lies which might well be put in forty lines."

"I did think that one of your name should serve the king," the lawyer said after some reflection.

"My way parted early from the way of my relations."
"Dexter: Dexter," he repeated, "were you not of Sidney Sussex College?"

A vision of Sidney College arose before me in all its glory of mellowed brick, its court of poplars thronged with flowers which used to send their fragrance upwards through the windows of my student-room, and the tears rose to my eyes.

"Can you let me have a reading of this document, which you call a Chancery Bill?" the lawyer asked.

"Mother Lam might know where it is." I called the woman, and she lit a candle to search in a secret place, where she kept the few belongings of myself and of my companions. Presently she returned bringing a bundle of papers which I had not seen for a long time, and I pulled out one which looked the most likely. I handed it to Master Walton, and bade the landlady return the packet to its place, having retained one or two others, which seemed of some immediate interest. The lawyer glanced through the sheets with his practised eye. He asked me to sign my name in a place at the end, which, I now saw, was reserved for that purpose. Mother Lam made shift to find a quill, and as I wrote my name, I made apology:

"This fragile instrument is more cumbersome to me

than a pike," and Master Walton put the paper in his pocket.

"We shall see what will come," said he. "But let us return to your conversation with the Lord General."

"He mentioned to me that there was a project which he had in mind; namely, to deal with the high conduct of the Duke of Florence towards some English travellers of the Protestant faith, and he desired to know if that principality was accessible to ships of light draught. I was obliged to admit that I had no great knowledge of designs by sea; but he asked me to draw a chart of the land, and he could judge of the sea for himself. I made a plot of all the contiguous countries in those parts, as well as I could, and it was pretty well done; for I had early learned to limn, and paint, and take on paper the situation of a castle, or the platform of a fortification, which are useful qualifications for a soldier."

"Do not understand me as questioning your qualifications, or the niceness of your perspectives. I am only asking what Cromwell said, as touching and appertaining to Phineas Pratt."

"The General studied the chart with much care, and asked many pertinent questions which I could answer only imperfectly; but he was cordial, and praised me with moderation."

"But, did he praise Captain Pratt?"

"His manner was impressive, and his utterance genial, as he completed the interview: 'Of any business pertaining to the sea I am at a loss to determine, and it is now I mourn the need of a friend which I once had, a man of infinite resource and invention, Captain Phineas Pratt. A long time since I

dispatched him to the Western Indies upon a service of importance and secrecy. But he never returned. If living or dead, if free or suffering captivity, I know not. But when there is leisure, I intend searching into the matter, and shall go to the bottom of it, even if I have to let the light into every prison in Spain."

"This Captain Pratt must be a man of no common mould," said the lawyer, "I shall send him his commission."

"And where is he now?" I asked.

"He is busking, backwards and forwards, from port to port, from Yarmouth to Delfshaven, and will wait for final orders under the Isle of Wight."

"I would that I might join him," said I with fervour.

"You must consult with Alderman Sherwyn as to that; at least, upon your own showing you must."

"There is another matter, also, upon which I would consult with him. It touches the events which led up to his going bail for me."

"Those events interest me too," said the lawyer; "the Alderman showed great concern when he heard your name cried in the court. I feared lest he might be overcome with the falling sickness."

"I am bidden to his house sometime before noon to-day."

"He must have some important design; for, though I am his counsellor these several years, I have never been within his doors."

"I cannot think why he should receive me so warmly. A service rendered ten years ago does not entirely explain the matter."

"Alderman Sherwyn has not trusted me fully, but I

guess from what I have heard that it concerns his daughter." The little lawyer eyed me narrowly. I saw that I was in unknown territory, where it might be dangerous even to ask my way, so I chose to stand still, and say nothing; and Master Walton regarded the conference as being at an end.

"I am myself going in the direction of Lombard Street," he said; "and shall walk with you a part of the way, at least."

"I am obliged to mend my dress," I replied, glancing at my worn, but serviceable, garments. "This is scarcely a costume in which to pay my respects to so exalted a personage."

"I can recommend you to a respectable outfitter in Cheapside, and his shop lies on our way," the lawyer said with his usual alacrity.

We went forth together; but when we came below, we found the streets were thronged, the shops closed, and the crowd in holiday attire. We passed by way of Fyshe Lane into Cheapside, but it was no better. A procession was approaching. The trumpets did nothing but sound, almost to the shaking of Paul's cross, had it been then standing. The windows and ways were thronged with people, and the walls were adorned with hangings of tapestry and costly stuffs. In every square were sets of loud music, and the conduits were running with claret wine. Standing along the streets were the trained bands of the city; and by their acclamations I knew that the king and queen were entering London.

"You are like to see the king," said my companion not unkindly.

"It is not the first time I have looked a king in the

face. I was Captain of the Guard, and I was near enough to learn that a king has a bone in his neck."

"As Sir Harry Vane has — and you also," the lawyer added by way of caution; for he saw that I was being remarked.

My heat moderated, when I saw the Sheriff's men advancing in their scarlet cloaks, with silver on the capes, and javelins in their hands.

"You see now what a serious matter it is, assaulting the Sheriff's officers," said Master Walton with amusement in his eyes.

"Especially with a life-guard behind them," I acknowledged freely.

The trumpets sounded louder than before, and three squadrons of guards, with more than a hundred men in each, came into view. They were very noble in their cavalier's hats, trimmed with white feathers, their scarlet coats laced with gold, having broad collars of white, and red sashes tied behind.

"The meanest of them, I am sure, is a baron, or a knight, or at least an esquire," said the little lawyer with awe in his face.

"That may well be," I admitted; "but a properly contrived movement at a round trot, opening up from the centre, and deploying upon both flanks would spoil the finery of this brave array."

"This parade looks to me like a solid mass of horses and men," said the civilian.

"Ay; a parade. Give me a troop of horses of bone, and a hundred of my men in their musket-proof head and breast pieces, and back guards fit to turn a pistol ball; put bridle chains in their hands; cover their

thighs with leathern breeches, and their legs with boots of the same, and I should prove to you that it is naught but a parade."

"God save His Majesty, King Charles the Second," the people shouted.

A hundred maids in white robes strewed the way with flowers. Great lords rode on either side, and following them were eminent citizens, well mounted, all in black velvet and chains of gold, each having a footman with suit and cassock and ribbon, the colour of his company. The companies themselves in livery, and with the ensigns belonging to them, extended farther than the eye could reach.

"There is the king," said Master Walton, "in the coach which is drawn by six Flemish mares."

"He looks like his father — his eyes in one place, his heart in another. But who is the little plain old woman, with her hair frizzed down to her ears?"

"She was the queen of England."

"And this woman who looks like a Portugee?"

"She will be queen of England. But look at the highspirited one, with the blonde locks, and the yellow, bird's eye hood."

"She is a proud, lewd, ugly-talking woman. Who is she — and the others?"

"In Latin they are called hirudines; in English, blood-suckers."

The river of people streamed down to Paul's churchyard, and left me and my companion stranded behind. Without more ado we made our way to the White Horse, at the corner of Lombard Street, and by reason of the splendour which I had witnessed, my own estate seemed all the meaner. Master Walton was compelled by thirst to enter the White Horse, where he was made much of, and we were given a quiet place in which we might be alone, as he appeared to have something further to say.

"You have seen the end," he began. "Your enemies are in full cry. They will chase you like wolves ravening for blood. Be advised by me. I can send you away in safety, and you can join Captain Pratt on the deck of the Covenant."

"A friend has pledged his honour for me, and I will not purchase my own safety at his expense," was the only reply which I could make.

"The thing was a ruse," the lawyer admitted. "I advised Alderman Sherwyn to offer a moderate bond which he would be free to forfeit; but the Chief Justice was cunning enough to demand his word under cover of magnanimity."

"If I am trapped, I shall be entrapped alone," I declared.

The lawyer became grave, and displayed some embarrassment in his manner, as if he were about to say something at the cost of his professional habit of reticence.

"I should mention to you," he began with deliberation, "that Alderman Sherwyn is much altered in his manner during the past few months; and at times I have thought that he was becoming deranged in his understanding."

"Because he was rich, I accounted him wise," I said.

"You judged hastily, and if this service which he has rendered to you were given of design, his design may not suit your purpose. If it was a mere whimsicality, he may regret it; and this very night he may turn you over to the officers of the law."

"That is his affair, not mine. I shall take a sword in my hand first. I lay one night in the Newgate, and conceived a dislike for my company. Had it not been for you and your friend, I should to-day be in the prison of the King's Bench. If Alderman Sherwyn fail me, I shall slash through their mittimus with my sword. His honour shall be safe, and mine too."

"If you are resolute to follow your own course, it is not for me to object. I see that you are a man who can be trusted. If you reach an extremity do not come to me. I cannot afford to have desperate men for clients or friends. But if you can contrive in any way to reach the house of Fess Knyvet, which stands next to the churchyard of Michell's, Corne Hill, you will be in safe hands. I would that you were to lie there to-night instead of with Gilbert Sherwyn." With this promise of refuge I became cheerful again, for I was fond of my life.

"You have granted me all which a reasonable man can ask," I assured him, "a place to fly to. If I fail to reach it, the fault will not be mine."

Master Walton paid the reckoning, and we arose. He took my hand with much cordiality; and, again reminding me of Fess Knyvet, he went out upon his many affairs of business, though he could not have been so busy as he seemed.

When the King's Counsellor left me I was alone, and it yet wanted an hour of the time, when I was to comply with Alderman Sherwyn's desire that I should visit him. The tavern was commodious, and I was well

defended against thirst and hunger; yet the minutes dragged heavily. Something stirred within me, and I had leisure to examine my heart. The little child was there. Suddenly my soul was filled with a gush of joy. "If," I said to myself, "this is not love, what then is this which I feel?"

I had kept myself free from the companionship of women, and thereby I honoured and cherished them. If a comrade praised them in my hearing I said: "They sleep soft, whilst you toss to and fro." If he protested that they were lovely, I replied that they are wilful. If he admired their beauty, I said they also admired it, and vain-gloried amongst their lovers in their youth; if beautiful — haughty; if winsome — variable as a leaf.

Of love I knew little, and what little I knew I did not like. I had no desire to know more, lest I might like it less. But now I was as a strong man who has drunk of a subtle poison. My resolution vanished. This then was the eternal thesis of the poets. I was in love with love. Was I happy? Judge ye who have been present at such a feast.

A harpy entered the room to ask for alms, and I gave her a silver piece. The varlet came to curse away the harridan; but when he heard how she blessed me, he let her be. I bestowed a coin upon him also, and their thankful words followed me as I set out upon my quest; for the precious hour was at an end.

CHAPTER V

As I approached Alderman Sherwyn's house, the burden of the years fell away from me. Gone was the hardness of the soldier's life, the tedium of winter quarters, the uncertainty of the campaign, and the fearful hazard of battle. Forgot were the evils of my present case, with choice only between the prison and exile.

A lovely strangeness had crept into my heart. I examined it narrowly; and, in so far as I could judge, it fulfilled all the conditions of a young passion of love. The thing was not of my seeking, yet I found myself cherishing it fondly.

I reached the house without difficulty. It stood close to the pavement, and gave an impression of richness, though there was nothing beyond the ordinary in its neat brickwork, and coigns of stone. The appearance of grandeur lay in the fine broad bays with their stone architraves, which marked the second storey, and the dormer windows with red tiles, which opened above the cornice upon the bell-cast roof.

I entered the recessed doorway and knocked. The door was opened by a sedate man as promptly as if opening doors were his only business in life. To have knowledge of the master I took careful notice of the servant. He was a decent, grave man, in purple clothes, with a large white wig, as if he were the major-domo of a bishop; and I thought his face a kind one.

"Is Alderman Sherwyn within?" I enquired, offering my hand to the elderly man. He retreated a step and made me a friendly bow, as if he were tonguetied. Then, with a benignant wave of the hand, he showed me into a room, bowed again, and backed away from the door as if he were afraid that I should prick him with my sword.

Left to myself, I was careful to observe my surroundings. It was a fine abode. The room in which I rested was floored above with woods of various colours, like the best cabinet work. The walls were in oak, and upon them were many pictures so darkened with age that I could not decipher their meaning. Presently the serious man returned to say that I had been expected, that he would conduct me to a sleeping-room, and that dinner would be served as soon as I had arranged my clothing.

"That will be a speedy affair," I said; "for I was compelled to come as I am, the streets being thronged, and the shop-keepers engaged upon the business of their own pleasure in the passing show."

"They had best attend to the wants of a gentleman," said the old man, with gravity, and he led
the way with a request that I should follow him.
With much ceremony he conducted me up the stairway, which was very commodious, with carved oak
newels, figures of armed men for terminals, and
profuse with mouldings and balusters. At the top of
the house he opened a door, and showed the way into
a pair of rooms wherein was a bath. There was not
much to be done with the means at my command;
but I was making shift to improve myself as well as

I could, when the door opened again and a blithe lad entered.

"The compliments of my master," he said, as he cast down an armful of clothing. I regarded this young man austerely, for he had a light manner, and belonged to a breed which was new to me. He laid out upon the bed a cloth coat of a light colour with gold edging at the seams, and broad cuffs doubling back upon the sleeves, a vest which was like a long cassock, pinked with white silk, breeches, stockings, and half boots with buckles, besides fresh linen, and a lace crayat.

"Shall I assist you in your dressing?" he asked, with his little nose in the air.

"Stand without until you are called." I spoke to the lad in such a voice as I would address a raw trooper, whereupon he quailed, and became civil.

When I was alone I regarded the rich apparel, and quickly found its uses. The thing was revolting. I was in the house of a stranger. I was his bondsman. That he should provide me with clothing went against my sense of the fitness of things. Yet, when I had arrayed myself and looked fixedly in a French mirror at the figure which I made, my mind was filled with satisfaction. The close cropped hair, with a bit of gray at the temples, showed that my head was made of bone. Wind and weather, and the smoke of battle, had overlaid my face with bronze; but the flow of spirits and the tide of blood showed their movements beneath. I drew myself up to the full height, and swelled my chest against the close-bodied vest. Even the doublet did not conceal the rise and play of muscle and sinew.

I moderated the splendour of my dress by checking the flow of the lace cravat, so that it would not fall down over the front of the vest like the adornment of a roystering rogue. I also discarded the baudric; for the rapier which it was intended to support below the left hip was but a trifling affair, and unworthy of a serious man.

When I had regarded myself for a good space in the mirror, all acerbity of temper fell away from me as if it had been a crust. I had more love for my life, and I was not so resolute to cast it away, as when I discussed my situation with the King's Counsellor. The thought came into my heart that I was under the same roof with the maiden whom I had rescued, though I had no surety of it, for I had refrained from enquiring, until I should know upon what ground I stood. At that moment there was a knock upon the door; and, when I opened it, the old serving man stood without. As he announced that dinner was served, and that his master attended below, he took no pains to conceal the good impression which my appearance created in his mind.

We descended the broad stairs, which were broad enough for two men-at-arms to ride abreast, and entered the room where I was first received. My heart sank when I saw that Gilbert Sherwyn was alone, standing against the low fireplace. There was a cloud upon his face, and his eyes were upon the floor. He did not lift them when I entered, so I was obliged to advance in order to engage his attention.

"I make bold to accept your invitation of yester-

day," I said, extending my hand, though he made no motion of greeting.

"Yesterday; an invitation!" The man looked at me in amazement.

"Sir, you remember, Captain Dexter for whom you bade me prepare," said the old butler, who was now at my elbow.

"Captain Dexter! Yes." His face cleared, and he offered me his hand with more appearance of cordiality than was necessary. His failure to remember me I attributed to my change of dress; for when I had looked in the glass, I scarcely recognized myself.

"My house is honoured," he protested most handsomely, "in harbouring so gallant a soldier. You did me an inestimable service, and I sought you long. I sought you long."

"By your noble conduct in the court you have amply repaid any slight assistance which I was able to render," I was prompt to reply.

"If I alone had been concerned, there might be some justice in your modest observation. But have you forgotten the little maiden who was under my care?" The Alderman looked at me narrowly as he put the question.

"There were some peculiarities in the case," I admitted. "If I remember aright, there was a maiden; and the rescue of a maiden was not so common an event that I should forget it."

The behaviour of the Alderman was an enigma to me; but he seemed well pleased with my judicious reply. His face grew bland; and, with an air of great satisfaction, he linked his arm in mine. As he conducted me to his dining-room, his hand trembled coarsely. Any hope which I had of seeing the child, died down when I observed that this room also was empty, save for the butler and another manservant, who busied themselves drawing the curtains and lighting the candles, for the afternoon was wearing on.

My host offered me a place opposite to himself. The table was set for two. I glanced about the room, thinking I might detect the operations of a feminine hand in the furnishings, or in the appointments of the table. But the walls were of austere oak, varnished and spotted with gold. The floor was cedar boards, which cast a pleasant smell. At the end was a huge chimney-piece of black and white marble, engraved with coats of arms, and adorned with statues of alabáster and bronze. The hangings were heavy green serge, the furniture in leather and gold, and the ceiling was adorned in plaster and paint with all manner of chimeras and excitements unfit for the gaze of the female eye.

Alderman Sherwyn's style of eating and drinking surpassed anything which I had ever seen. The butler stood by his side, and placed a dish before him; but he teased, and played with the food, as if it were poisoned. He sniffed and smelled, then put it away with a gesture of impatience, and immediately called for another dish of the same. If I was to have no conversation, at least I should have refreshment; and, as the dinner was incomparably good, and in defiance of all expense, I made free with the subtleties which were set before me, and especially with some claret wine, which was as cool as if it had been drawn from a well.

The dinner progressed in silence, save for the voice

of the butler, who spoke to his master as if he were caring for a peevish child. Also, like a child, my host grew more contented as he continued to eat. The silliness of his demeanour offended me, and in spite of the goodness which I had received, I thought my plight was but a sorry one, bound to this man by the impalpable bond of honour. It came into my mind that I would accept the lawyer's advice, and flying from the house, seek sanctuary with Phineas Pratt upon the deck of the *Covenant*. Afterwards I discovered that this falsity of intention arose from my fine clothes, the warmth of the wine, and a recrudescence of the love of luxury.

Good or bad, the thought made me bold. My host was now more calm. He seized the table-ornaments which were near at hand, and ranged them before him in orderly rows. When this manœuvre was accomplished to his satisfaction, he sat back in his chair, his face beaming with cordiality. In the presence of so much irresolution all sense of embarrassment left me, and I was ready to assume the direction of affairs, and ask any question which I wished. But my host was before me, and began to speak as if he were merely resuming the thread of a conversation which had been broken off ten years before at the *Green Man* on the edge of Southam Heath.

"That was a resolute deed of yours," he said, as the servants left the room.

"I trust that you will excuse me from further mention of a matter so trivial, save that it concerned yourself and your daughter," I said, with some irritation at his persistence.

"The child was not my daughter. She was my ward."

"I supposed as much. When you and I went into the room where she lay half-awakened from her sleep, and you addressed her as 'Beatrix,' a look of wonderment came into her face, and she said, 'My name is not Beatrix: I am all alone.'"

"Your memory of past events is as keen as my own," said Mr. Sherwyn, with close scrutiny. I feared that I had betrayed the incredible interest which I had in the child, but my entertainer showed no alarm.

"Is the child still living?" I asked, in a casual way.

"She is no longer a child. She is a grown woman, and
must now be above seventeen or nineteen years of age."

"Above seventeen or nineteen years of age!" I repeated. "Was she then a stranger to you, that you do not know with exactness the time of her birth?"

"I am yet in ignorance of her parentage or her name," he said firmly.

"Could it not be ascertained by searching?" I enquired, having in mind the anguish which the loss of such a child would create in a parent's heart.

"I acquit myself of the charge of laxity," he protested, in a stolid way. "I left nothing undone. I would have restored her, but not with any degree of cheerfulness."

"Then she is with you to this day," I cried joyfully, as if my joy were on his account alone.

"She abides with me, and is the stay of my advancing years and declining health."

"Besides this goodness to me, am I to see the child again?" I enquired lightly.

"That is as it may be: I must first have your promise."

"I cannot promise blindly," said I, in fear that he might demand that I should not entertain for her the sentiment of love.

"You are right. Beatrix is, as she thinks herself, a very daughter to me. I have brought her up as my own. It is known to you that she is not my child, and the knowledge came to you in a legitimate way. It is within your right to disclose it. It is also within my right to protect my own interests, and hers also, as I understand them. Unless you promise, you shall not see her. I parted from my own son in anger upon this same question. Is it less likely I should part in anger from you?" The Alderman's face grew hard, and his eyes restless.

"I did not mean to offend you. I have no occasion to interfere in your design." I saw in his face that he would instantly withdraw his protection from me, a contingency for which I was not prepared; and as he demanded less than I had expected, I answered promptly: "I promise."

"Then we are of the same mind," he said kindly; "my only thought is for her welfare."

By this time the servants had returned. They proceeded to remove the cloth, whilst my host talked with me upon indifferent subjects, as rationally as any man could. Fresh candles were brought and liquors were placed upon the polished board. I was expecting the entrance of Beatrix; but Gilbert Sherwyn was as cheerful as if he might talk all day and far into the night, so I disposed myself to listen with what good

grace I could, yet with the resolve to lead his wandering mind back to his ward.

"I have a curiosity," I said frankly, "to know of the circumstances under which the child came under your care, and I would learn so much as you are free to tell."

Thereupon the Alderman commenced a long relation, which I think best to contract into a small compass; for what consumed the afternoon in the telling would require a week, if I were to set it out in full order.

"In the month of May, in the year, 1648," he began with tedious preciseness, "I went out of London into Spain. I had suffered a sore domestic loss which seemed to be the end of all earthly things for me. I had already acquired a competency, and resolved to go abroad to see strange places; since, when I was young and living idly I used to apply myself to the reading of history, and other strange romances. When I had seen the customs of the country, and learned some parts of the language, I was convinced that the Spaniards, in virtue of their noble dispositions, were incompetent for commerce, therefore my passion for trade revived."

Here the merchant turned aside to mention the places which he visited, and to describe in detail the wares which he purchased. He fixed his eyes in a vacant stare, and proceeded to explain the manufacture of each commodity with great tediousness. With difficulty I made a pretence of listening. But all things have an end, and the narrative became interesting again.

"I bestowed my goods in a ship of two hundred tons

burthen, or thereabouts, and according to the time of year had a fair passage to Gibraltar. Here I was compelled to wait for convoy, being unwilling to tempt the corsairs of Barbary, who were credited with being easily led aside from the path of honesty.

"I resolved to improve the delay by a visit to the cloistered solitudes of Alcalà de los Gazules, where excellent cloths were wrought by the needles of the sisters who care for the Children of the State. the prioress, and proposed to her an adventure of trade in the fabrics which she had. Whilst the terms were being arranged, to my amazement I heard a child singing to herself in the English tongue. I enquired of the woman with whom I did my business, and a very competent woman she was, as to the name and origin of the child; but she professed entire ignorance, save that the little one was a Child of the State, and had been handed over to the convent for keeping. The prioress sent for the maiden, and addressed her as Beatrix, a name which she has borne ever since. little Beatrix possessed a strange fascination for me. I addressed her in the English tongue, and the tears rose to her eyes. I asked her if she was unhappy, and she said she was not, but she wanted her father. I asked of her mother, and she said she never had one."

"It was a good deed, ransoming the child and saving her from the Marian idolatry," I assured him.

"My father was of the Catholic religion," he said coldly; "and on that account I had less difficulty in obtaining possession of the child."

"Was she committed formally to your care?" I asked with a note of apology for my curiosity.

"Unfortunately: Yes," said the merchant with senseless irritation. "I made a present of gold to the Charity, and so proved my competency for the charge. There were many formalities to be observed, and many papers to be signed; but in the end Beatrix was handed over to me, to have and to hold, to nourish and foster as my own child. And under the Second of Henry the Eighth that contract holds in the English Law. She is my child with all the rights: my ward with all the disabilities pertaining to that relationship," he added in a voice which shook with passion. The merchant, when he became calm, quoted the statute, and recited its terms with the ease of a practised lawyer.

"But you have been well rewarded by the devotion of this woman who came so strangely into your life," I said, in wonder at his mingling of love and jealousy.

"I make no complaint," he admitted in a querulous tone.

"Tell me of your voyage to England," I requested, not that I cared to know, but hoping that a recital of past events would mollify his humour.

"I took Beatrix with me to Gibraltar, and her winsomeness increased with every hour of the journey.
My ship lay in the harbour, and I secured a boat to
pass from the shore, having my goods in the bottom,
and the little one upon my knee. I saw a galley approaching, and my boatmen lay on their oars to allow
it to pass. The rowers were chained, five to each oar,
save at the ends, where were the vougevants who in
this case were Turks, wearing iron collars as the only
mark of their slavery. Two or three creatures like

jackanapes were darting backwards and forwards, screaming like paraquets, and outting right and left with a bastinado, or tough wand, upon the backs of the rowers, who were naked from the waist up.

"The galley shot across our bows, and flew up the harbour in a furrow of foam. When the accursed craft was at the nearest, the little maiden leaped from my arms crying, 'Father! Father!' Upon the word a man arose from his bench, and with a fearful cry cast himself into the sea, as far as his chain would allow. There was a noise and tumult such as could find no parallel except amongst the damned in hell. The man was dragged inboard struggling horribly. The Comites who were in command cursed us away. I covered my eyes with my hand to shut out the shocking spectacle, and the little one buried her face in my cloak, and cried with sobs and exclamations in English, as if the man who was chained to the oar were in reality her father."

"He may have been," said I. "At this day there are many English seamen suffering a like fate." And there arose in my mind a remembrance of the words of Cromwell, when he spoke of the long silence of Phineas Pratt and threatened that he would search for him if he had to let the daylight into every prison in Spain.

"When we came on board," the merchant continued, without heeding my suggestion, "I sent the shipmaster to ascertain the name of the galley, and if any English were condemned therein. He came back presently, and reported that he had speech with the Comites who were allowed to come on shore, and have their families in the ports."

"And what did they say?" I enquired hotly.

"They admitted that they had three sullen dogs of Englishmen whom they were endeavouring to reduce to obedience, and that they had only newly arrived from the Spanish Main, where they had been condemned for an attempt at piracy in the Islands of the Western Indies."

"Could you get no further knowledge of your fellow-countrymen who were suffering that horrible captivity?" I asked with some reproach.

"I learned that the name of the galley was the Jesus and Mary, but that was a common name."

"Could not the names of the captives have been discovered?"

"The Comites would not disclose them, and as the guns of the castle sounded at that moment to signify that convoy was ready, we were obliged to make sail."

"But when you returned to England, could you not have enquired in the proper quarter?"

"I did appeal to the Council, but you well remember the disorders of those years; and the event was so common it merited no especial notice."

"It was all which I could do. The sudden cry of an affrighted child is no evidence that the man was her father; but I did hear that this galley was afterwards dispatched to the Bahamas, and that, by reason of the change of air and the corruption of the soil, all died of the tabardilla or spotted fever."

The day had worn to its close before Gilbert Sherwyn concluded his account of the circumstances under which Beatrix had come into his house. Whilst he dealt with events of the past, his recollection was clear and his delivery easy. When he spoke of present affairs, his memory became confused and his utterance peevish. I had learned all that he could tell, and more than I desired to know. My present concern was to meet Beatrix face to face, to revive the memories of her childhood, and to speak the thought which should arise in my heart. I hoped that we should leave the table, but Mr. Sherwyn called for fresh candles, and his stream of talk broke out afresh. I heard a flutter of garments, the patter of light feet; but my back being to the door, my eyes gave no information to my heart. The sounds passed, and presently were followed by a small tinkling upon a harpsichord, which came from above.

"That is Beatrix," cried my host, and his face shone as if he had seen an angel. Sounds of singing came floating down the stairway.

"She is the only one of the female kind which I have had by my hearth these ten years," he continued. "I shall have her always. My life would be at an end without her presence."

"But am I to see the little Beatrix again?" I demanded boldly.

"She knows that you are here. I meant but to give you thanks in private, before craving your further assistance; but we have consumed the day in talk, and I have not yet come to the business in hand."

Alderman Sherwyn lifted an imploring face to mine. Tears were in his eyes. I arose and extended my hand across the table. He seized it with a trembling grasp, and assisted himself to his feet.

"I came to your house in virtue of your mercy," I assured him, "little thinking there was anything which I could do to manifest my gratitude. Do but tell me how I may acquit myself of this burden of favour under which I lie."

"You saved us once. I ask you to save us again. I have sought you diligently; and when I saw you in the court, I knew that I could lean upon you."

"But how, or when?" I cried in bewilderment, still holding his hand.

"I have a besetment to kill my beloved child," he cried, and in a passion of weeping he stretched forth his arms upon the table, and bowed his head to hide the distortion of his poor face.

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CHAPTER VI

With men who fight I can contend; with men who weep I am helpless. Here was a nice enterprise for a soldier—like a keeper in Bedlam guarding an old man against the phantoms of his brain. This, then, was why he went bonds for me. But should I be bound to the prejudice of my life by the fantasy of a disordered mind? My instant thought was of escape into the rough world again. Let those who were bound to him by closer ties look to it; or let them have recourse to the law, if they believed that there was reality in this besetment to kill his much-loved ward.

But if it were so! What then? I had not seen the child this ten years past. I knew nothing of her disposition, her understanding, her upbringing, or her faith; and the passion which I had conceived for her was of a kind with the madness in the old man's brain, save that it was an impulse in the contrary direction. This, then, was the firstfruits of love, and I resolved not to make a fool of myself in that direction at least. Yet the man had trusted me, had appealed to me, and the contemptibleness of his aspect and demeanour cried aloud for pity. It would be doing no injustice to myself if I yielded for a moment. I placed my arm about his bowed shoulders; and with the contact there came into my heart a sensation

of kindness, and out of that arose a sentiment of affection for the afflicted man.

"This is a mere passing obsession," I said to soothe him. "You have been a noble friend to Beatrix, and I shall defend you against yourself." Somehow the sound of the name was sweet in my ears.

By this time the servants were alarmed by their master's cries, and came to his relief; but, arising as well as he could, he clung to me, as if I were his only refuge.

"Will you assist me in conducting my master to his sleeping chamber?" the chief butler besought me. "I fear to alarm the young mistress."

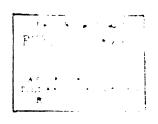
I gathered the frail old man in my arms as if he had been a child. His hoary hair fell about his venerable face, now grown pallid from the reaction against his excess of emotion. The butler took a candle, and led the way. I bore my burden up the wide staircase, and entering a room, deposited it gently upon the bed. A servant lighted clusters of candles which were contained in sconces against the wall, and in the glare of light my kind friend's face looked gray and drawn, and his breast heaved distressfully.

"Send for the leech," commanded the butler, to the young man who was busying himself about the room with noiseless steps; but he said that one had already gone upon the errand.

As I composed myself after my strong and unusual effort, I heard the sound of running feet. The door which faced me across the bed was opened, and Beatrix—for my heart told me it was she,—bearing he beauty as a queen her crown, stood in the full ligh



"Bearing her beauty as a queen her crown"



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There was now no question as to the direction in which my duty lay.

She paused for a moment between the parted curtains, but that moment was long enough to disclose the dark richness of her face, a few small curls above the long low forehead, and the ringlets of hair which escaped from a bandeau of pearls, and flowed like a torrent over her shoulders. Her eyes had the colour of a well-wrought gun barrel, as they looked at me steadfastly. As she drew herself up to her full height, in surprise and alarm, she had all the straightness of a halberd, and yet her figure was full of curves like the neck of a horse.

"Captain Dexter," she said, as she advanced to the side of the bed and cast a frightened glance upon her father, "I can find no suitable words to give you thanks."

I extended my hand across the prostrate form. She bent forward, and placing her fingers lightly beneath my rough hand, she raised it gently to her lips.

"Captain Dexter," she said again, in a voice which was low and incredibly sweet, "I owe you thanks, and do give you thanks, for adventuring your life in defence of me and my father, and now again for coming to us in our need."

"It was your father who came to my rescue, when I was in a narrow strait for a friend, and now he has granted me the goodness of looking upon your face again."

I did look upon her face, and it was good to look upon, full of sweetness and purity. The touch of her fingers was familiar, though this was the first occasion upon which the operation had been performed upon me. I say the feeling was familiar. It was the same which I felt when first I took a sword in my hand against the evil which is in the world; and now again there arose in my heart a flame of desire for goodness, which not the years nor the faithlessness of men have been able to quench.

Concern for her father compelled her to withdraw her eyes from mine. She bent over him, her breast swelling with an intaken breath of apprehension; she placed a hand upon his brow and scrutinized the apathetic face.

"He is not dead: he is asleep," she cried, and a smile of ineffable tenderness passed over her face. The clear sound of that tuneable voice thrilled me as I had not been thrilled by my Lord-Captain's cry: "Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered."

The manservant announced that the physician had arrived, and he ushered him into the room, where he found Beatrix and me standing at opposite sides of the bed, and upon it the prostrate form of his patient. The physician was a robust man, of a large frame, and heavy, regular features; and yet, I thought, not above my own age.

"What have we here?" he said, with masterly directness, as he advanced and seized the sick man's wrist. He almost pushed me from my place, which afforded occasion for me to pass to the other side of the bed, and stand by Beatrix's side, and instantly I came under the spell of the subtle spirit which went out from her. The physician regarded his patient attentively, his own long brown hair falling over his reddish complexion in a natural way.

"When did this seizure take place?" he enquired, lifting his grey eyes to mine.

"Less than an hour since," I said; "but there were premonitions before that."

"How long before?" he asked, with none of the smoothness of the courtly physician in his voice.

"My father is much altered in his disposition and understanding for more than a year," Beatrix answered quietly for me.

The physician waved the servants backward with a peremptory gesture, and bade them admit the air. In the silence of the room he studied the patient with care and deliberation, until the silence became unbearable to Beatrix.

"What is the explanation of this seizure?" she cried, seeking relief for her distress.

"I take the view," said the physician firmly, "that we shall go without any hypothesis, and study the conditions as they appear. This man is a stranger to me, and I am unaware of the epidemic constitution, and other natural causes of his disease. I would study the processes before striving after an explanation."

"Is it a disorder of the physical humours, or some derangement of the vital spirits?" I asked, in an aimless way.

"I do not follow the iatro-physical school, with its doctrines of trituration; nor the iatro-chemical school, in its teaching that acridities, and the intestinal movement of particles, are the cause of disease. Still less do I hold with Van Helmont that the body is controlled by the archeus influus, and the organ of the soul by the archei insii, and both subject to the central archeus.

ONETA PLENT

Therefore I cannot tell you if the affection be due to an alteration in the primary qualities of the humours, or to a derangement of the vital spirits, as you suggest."

"I spoke foolishly," said I, with humility, not understanding what he said.

"You did," the physician assented, more cheerfully than I thought was necessary in the presence of Beatrix; and he continued with some warmth, though not neglecting to observe his patient: "I am not tied up either with Galen and the four humours, nor with the sal-sulphur and antimony of Paracelsus, nor yet with the acids and alkalies of Sylvius and Willis."

"But can you do nothing for the easement of my father?" cried Beatrix, with a helpless out-spreading of her hands.

"That question is more to the point," said the physician, with graciousness. "As for the healing of the sick I adhere to the view that disease is nothing more than the effort of Nature to restore health to the patient by eliminating the morbific material. If a man trust to the vis medicatrix natura, a little observation will carry him far in the curing of his patients, and that with common things, and almost no medicine."

"And can you cure my father?" she cried, with a sudden accession of hope.

"I can administer the remedies: Nature alone can cure the disease."

The physician had finished his scrutiny of the patient, who now began to revive, and became restless, moaning, and tossing his arms. He took from his case a coarse powder which, he said, was Jesuit's bark from

Peru, and mingled it with a fluid which he explained was a liquid preparation of opium devised by himself. He administered the potion, and the drugs soon manifested their soporific quality. As the physician was going away, he said that he hoped the patient would sleep till morning, when he would see him again; but that in the meantime he required watching, and so in a simple and manly fashion he bade us good-night.

CHAPTER VII

Nothing was more to my taste than that I should watch through the night with Beatrix. All sense of strangeness between us had passed away. She was to me the child, grown larger, whom I had borne at my saddle bow. Her hair was the same which had blown in my face. Those were the very arms which had twined about my neck, during the midnight ride. It would not have surprised me had she lifted her face to be kissed, as she did that November morning, when she rode away with her father from amidst my troopers and the violent scenes of justice.

"What a God's mercy!" Beatrix murmured devoutly, as she lifted her eyes and regarded me with trust and affection.

I was to her the simple soldier upon whom she might rely. She busied herself about the room, and whilst she was absent upon some business, the servants placed their sleeping master comfortably in his bed below the coverings. Beatrix returned presently, and gave a contented glance at the merchant. Then she reduced the lights to a dull glow; and, placing her hand below my arm, conducted me through the door by which she first entered, into the large withdrawing room.

It was a noble apartment, and extended across the front of the house, save for a small room at the end,

which opened from the larger one. In the dim light and distance I could see that the door was slightly ajar; and as Beatrix went to close it, I judged that this must be her sleeping chamber. The light was dim, but it was sufficient to reveal the beauty of her face and the outline of her figure, as she came and sat upon a low stool at my side, so that her face was on a level with my shoulder. She chose a place where we could hear the slightest stir of the sleeping man, and that choice was the source of much of the trouble which afterwards befell to both of us, for he also heard the things which we said.

My habit of mind and the training of years were against the composition of talk which was suitable for the female ear, and when at length I began to speak, I said openly what was in my mind, and I think Beatrix was the better pleased at being treated as a reasonable creature.

"This is a great reward," I began, as soon as I could find the use of words, "to see a maiden nested in her own home. It is the first occasion upon which I have witnessed so pleasing a spectacle."

"It is a great favour which my father does to me, allowing me to meet again a courageous soldier. To this day I carry the memory of that rude awakening in the coach, and the midnight ride. It seems like the beginning of things to me. Before that all is confused and dark."

"I profess," said I lightly, "that trivial adventure with the marauders of the road is bigger in my imagination than the stiff struggle, when we lay entrapped between the sea and the hills of Dunbar." "Are you not glad that these wars are at an end, and that peace has come?" Beatrix asked.

"There can be no end," I said, "till right shall prevail."

"It appears to me that right and wrong in political affairs are according to the sense of him who uses the terms."

"Ah, no," I said, "these principles for which we have fought all these years are not a creation of the mind."

"You follow one way; my father follows another. Yet I have heard him say that those who fought against the king were mistaken rather than wicked."

"Not wicked; not mistaken," I said, in all gentleness.

"Of the king and of his cause I have heard much; but you are the first I have known, who could instruct me in the principles which actuated his enemies — his opponents, I mean."

The living thing which had come into my life was so strong within me, the manner of the maiden was so trusting, I was constrained to declare my whole mind, and I disclosed to her those principles which must concern all true and high natures. I explained to her, I believe with some force, that the days in which we fought were the days of the power of God in the land; that we had made a pure and undefiled religion to prevail; that we had heard the cry of those who were oppressed, and came to their help against the strong; that we were the scourge of God upon the daughters of Belial, till not one of them durst wag the tongue, and the brood of the serpent we had driven from their lair, like swine in the country of Gadara. Her eyes dilated with interest, it may have been in the earnestness of my speech

as much as in the importance of the things which I said.

"But did you not lay violent hands upon the king, the sovereign, the repository of all authority upon earth?" she demanded, with a shrinking from me, as I thought.

"Upon the king, yes; upon the sovereign, no. All sovereignty lies in the heart of the individual, equally, whether he wear an ermine robe or a leathern doublet."

"Then upon the bishops and upon the priests?"

"No; for every man is his own priest, and his bishop is Christ."

"But upon the Church?"

"Not that either. Every gathering of men who are resolute that right shall prevail is a church."

"How then did you not succeed?" Beatrix asked, not in triumph but in pity.

"If we failed, we failed not through error, but by faithlessness. If we are now vexed in spirit, it is because we were divided in counsel. If we are as sheep without a shepherd, the wolves are upon England also, that fair fold."

"I am not instructed in public affairs," she said simply. "My father has always kept me close, yet the trouble has come into this quiet place."

"Are your friends, too, divided by allegiance to king or to people?" I asked.

"We have few friends; and none come here any more, since my father has altered his geniality of disposition."

"Do you then live alone in this large house?"

"Yes, since my brother is gone, now three days since."

"Then you have a brother!" I cried, and I was doubly sure that Beatrix had not been instructed in the mystery which overhung her parentage.

"I have a brother," she repeated. "He, like your-self, is a soldier, yet he serves the king."

"Does he serve him truly?"

"He gives to the king the service of his heart."

"I have known many such," I assured her with entire assent. "But yesterday I became engaged in a controversy in a house of entertainment, the Swan with Two Necks, where I had entered for some refreshment, and a king's officer spoke kindly and handsomely for me."

"I heard my brother say that he goes to that resort," said Beatrix with a note of tenderness in her voice. "He is a good man, and I am sure would speak kindly and handsomely, if there were need."

"It may have been he," I said in wonder that my fate should be so bound up with this household.

"It may have been," Beatrix exclaimed, and added quickly: "though he does not in the slightest possess any resemblance to me."

"Yet he was a handsome, and noble gentleman," I protested; "a brave man; and a man may be brave and noble, and yet, as I think, misguided."

"How misguided? My brother is governed by his own heart and conscience."

"These are guides not to be trusted blindly, unless they are touched with emotion, and enlightened by knowledge."

"There is a conflict in duty, and a conflict in love, which confuses me," she said in a tremulous voice, and a cloud of perplexity passed over her fair face.

"You do love your brother?" I asked with a sudden stillness of the heart.

"And he loves me as a sister never yet was loved."

"And you love your father dearly?"

"He is my father. He loves me; yet there is a passion of jealousy in his love which terrifies me. It is more than the love of a father."

"And what of the relation between your brother and your father?" I asked, feeling at length that I was getting to the root of the strange conduct of my host. Her tears began to fall silently.

"They parted in anger," she said, "and he is forbidden again to enter his father's house."

"It must have been some vital matter which arose to divide so noble a son from so kind a father." Her tears continued to fall. Her breast heaved.

"God forgive me," she murmured; "I feel that this evil thing has come through me."

Beatrix continued to cry softly, and I was compelled to endure it. I had an incitement to take her hands in mine, and caress away her tears; for she was the more beautiful in her tearfulness. But I had not sufficient knowledge for estimating the success which might attend such a manœuvre. Beatrix grew calm again, and lifted her face.

"I love simplicity; yet I am an enigma to myself—I seem to be three persons in one," she said with a feeble smile.

This was a new light to me on that important doctrine of the New Catechism, a matter which I never got to understand fully; but this was no time for resolving doubts which have nothing to do with love; and,

as that was the subject which now concerned me most closely, I allowed her to proceed.

"Before you came into my life — and you have been in my thoughts ever since — events seem to have happened, which make up a very part of myself. At my devotions I find myself uttering strange prayers. With my closed eyes I see long lines of dark-robed women; and I hear a host of little children murmuring in the Spanish tongue. When my heart is lightest, mournful melodies sing in my ears; and, at times, I fancy I can catch a word — shepherds and pastures — and hear the sound of harps, and running waters."

It was clear enough to me that these Spanish prayers were a confused reflection from her convent days. But for the rest—the simple songs—it must have been an inheritance from a still earlier stage of existence, which was hidden from me, as well as from her.

A sound of urgent distress came from within. Beatrix left my side to enquire into the sick man's condition. She closed the door when she entered, yet I could hear that he was awake. He spoke in a peremptory tone, as if he were disregarding her caresses, for the discharge of some business. A bell rang through the house. A servant mounted the stairs; and shortly afterwards the street door closed, as if one had departed upon an errand. A clock in the neighbouring steeple sounded ten strokes.

It may have marked each of the other two hours which had passed, whilst I had been sitting by the side of Beatrix, but I did not hear them. Her presence was to me as if I had the quaking palsy: her absence struck me like the chill of a quartan fever. Whilst she was gone,

I resolved upon nothing less than to tell her of the thing which was in my heart, and I made an attempt to marshal the words which I would employ. The ordering of men, the ranging of troopers, or even the debate of public policy was an easy matter compared with this; and when she returned, after what appeared an unconscionably long time, my words had fled and left me speechless.

"Is your father grown worse?" I enquired with real sympathy in my heart, and voice.

"He is fallen asleep again," she replied.

"I thought I heard a messenger depart, and feared it might imply that the services of the physician were urgently demanded."

"It was nothing more than a whim — some secret business which, he supposed, required attention. He was ever a man of affairs."

"I fear that the business which he transacted yesterday, when he went bonds for me in the court, has been an annoyance to him," I said with a strange suspicion at my heart, which I was successful in concealing.

"He told me nothing of that," Beatrix protested.
"I believed this visit of yours arose merely out of his good nature to me."

"And that is true," said I, remembering the fearful confession which he made that he had a besetment to kill the child whom he loved so well. Then I was obliged to relate to her the whole incident of my trouble; how I had been wrongfully seized; how her father had so nobly pledged his word for me, and invited me within his house.

Late as was the hour, a peremptory knocking resounded upon the street door. The serving man went to open it, and I heard voices below. Presently he returned to the withdrawing room with apprehension upon his face.

"A Sheriff's officer is below and desires to speak with Alderman Sherwyn," he said; and upon the instant I knew that I had been betrayed.

"Did you not tell him that your master was on a bed of sickness?" I asked, assuming the direction of affairs.

"I told him nothing, save that I would convey his message."

"Is he familiar with your master's appearance?" I enquired.

"I guess not, for he asked me if I was Alderman Sherwyn," the civil fellow answered with a faint smile of apology, and a downward glance at the cloak which he wore over his livery, in preparation for the vigil of the night.

"Then I shall take knowledge of the man's business," I said, as I arose.

Beatrix was already in front of me, her eyes dilated with apprehension; but I put aside gently the detaining hand which she placed upon my arm.

"We shall see what all this means. Dangers have a habit of vanishing, when they are faced," I said, and descended the stairs, until I caught sight of the Sheriff's officer within the doorway.

"Are you the Alderman Sherwyn?" the man demanded in a moderate tone, as I came below.

"Do not come to a citizen's house, at this unseemly hour, for the sake of asking questions. State your business." I spoke sharply, but kept my back to the light.

Thereupon the man pulled a paper from his breast, and read it at me in a mechanical way. Out of the

flux of words I could extract some matter, and it was serious enough. It was nothing less than a demand from the Sheriff that Alderman Sherwyn should produce the body of Nicholas Dexter in the court, at ten of the clock on the following morning. The man paused when he had finished his reading, and I gave him a piece of money for his pains.

"You may say that the behest of the court shall be obeyed," I told the officer as he backed to the door, making a humble bow as he passed out. Neither the fellow, nor his business interested me. I had tasted of a subtle poison, and could not endure without it.

I returned to the withdrawing room, and found Beatrix in her place. I took my former seat beside her. Her face was full of enquiry, and alarm, as she turned an appealing gaze upon me.

"What does all this business signify?" she asked, and the water glistened in her sweet eyes.

"It means that I am to go out of your house for the last time, and that the power of your father to keep me is at an end."

"But not at once," she cried. "Would that my father were himself, he could surely devise some means."

"To-night only can I claim this shelter. To-morrow morning I am commanded to the court."

"Can you not fly to-night? Would that I knew where to find my brother; he would save you, because he loves me."

"That I cannot. My honour is bound up with the honour of this household. Your father went bonds for me, and honour makes me bide."

"But my father is ill. He would be held blameless for your escape."

"He is ill. Therefore I shall take his duty upon myself."

"What can I do?" said Beatrix in a low passionate cry, outspreading her palms with a gesture of helplessness. Her hand was so convenient, I took it in mine; but she withdrew it gently, with a downcast look.

"Let us be cheerful," I said, "for the small time which remains."

"How can you be cheerful with this danger confronting you?"

"Then do you be cheerful for both of us."

"I cannot be cheerful for myself alone; though I dwell in peace and comfort in my father's care, and in my brother's love."

I had a strange and secret intelligence that I should find an ally in her heart, and that the door would be opened, if love knocked boldly.

"And I love you too," I said simply, wondering that the words came so easy; "and God forgive me for mingling His creature with her Creator."

"If it is forgiveness you desire, I believe the times are such that you can easily find a confessor," she said in her own light way.

"I require no confessor but you; and now I confess that I have broken the sum of all the commandments, in that I love my neighbour more than myself, and more than any other thing."

"Then you are in the class of Pharisees who performed more than the law demanded."

"But there is more than this. I have made an image of you in my heart; and lastly, I earnestly covet something which is my neighbour's, his incomparable daughter."

This was a great speech; but I spoke it as the words came, according to the motion of my heart, not looking for the issue. I could do no otherwise, were it to redeem my soul, and when it was finished, there came a wonderful easement of my mind.

Beatrix was in a state of rosy confusion, with a comely blush upon her face, and a mild, sweet look in her eyes. I had said all which I had to say, now it was her turn to speak.

"I have no experience, and am unripe in the matter of love," she said. "I know neither the state of my mind, nor have I words to express it, save that I am drawn to you by a sentiment of trust, and honour, which is strong, and new."

With this avowal I changed my dispositions. I arose, and took her hand firmly in mine. Upon this occasion she neglected to draw it away, and we stood face to face in a great silence.

"I shall cherish this blossom of love, which you have planted in my breast," I protested, "and if I go down into the darkness, I shall count it the greatest of God's many goodnesses to me, that He has given me to know even thus intimately the rarest of His handiwork which has graced the earth."

"My father trusts me. I can make no further promise," Beatrix murmured, and came nearer to me.

"I ask no pledge. Honour and my sword are my sole possession. To them I add — your trust in me."

"I do more than trust you," she confessed.

"I am a man marked out for death; but while life endures, I shall remain bound. You shall remain free, so long as you will." "I do not desire to remain free," she whispered low, as if her lips had betrayed the secret of her heart; and I thought it not the least sweet of the innumerable forms of avowal which might have been employed.

All sense of time, and place, and circumstance fled from me. I drew Beatrix close to me. She raised upon me the full glory of her countenance; and, in that instant, the promise of the little child was fulfilled.

As Beatrix raised her head a look of terror came into her eyes, and she gazed across my shoulder as if she were fascinated. By a visible effort she broke the spell, and with a low cry she turned and fled from the room into her own sleeping chamber. I wheeled about to discover the cause of her confusion, and there was the merchant standing in his doorway, his eyes blazing, and his face working with passion.

I never was more self-controlled in my life. I was as proud of myself as when I captured the royal banner at Worcester. Instead of confusion or fear, my heart was filled with pity. If he wished to speak, I was there to hear and to answer.

But the anger passed out of his face, and in its stead came weakness and cunning. He said never a word, but groped his way to the bed. How much he had seen, or how much he had heard, whether indeed his senses were shut, though his eyes were open, I could not tell. At any rate, when I followed him into his room, he was sleeping so quietly that I was convinced he knew nothing. I called the servants and they extinguished the lights. Then I mounted to my own chamber and left them to watch.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN I entered my chamber to spend the last night of freedom upon earth, it surprised me that I was full of joy. The greatest thing in the world had come into my life; and I suppose it had cast out all fear. Also, I was set free, for I was already as good as condemned to death, and when this other great thing has happened to a man, he takes little account of minor affairs.

Nor was my ecstasy lessened, when I reflected that I should never see Beatrix again. My mind was already full, and the worst that the world could do had no place in it. Stranger still, my elation was not diminished by the reflection that Beatrix might be embarrassed by the scene which her guardian had witnessed, or that I might have left in her heart a living spring of grief. Even his fearful obsession to destroy her life seemed nothing more than the humorous fantasy of a disordered mind, a figment of the imagination, entirely dissociated from the will to put it into effect. It was merely absurd to me that one so young, and so beautiful, should die.

My room was in a high and quiet place. I removed my fine clothing, and laid it beside my well-worn garments, which now seemed strange to me, as if I had worn them in some previous stage of existence. Until tonight I had not learned the habit of going naked, since the doffing of clothing takes time from sleep, and putting it on again might occasion the consumption of precious moments, if one were awakened suddenly to some great need, by the snarling of the trumpets or the clash of arms.

I retired to my bed as the bells were ringing for midnight; and, according to my habit, was in a profound sleep almost before the sounds had died away. I knew not how long I had been sunk in stupidity, when I was aroused to my full senses by the fearful cry of a woman, which was more fearful, by reason of its inarticulateness. But in the awfulness of its horror I could detect the voice of Beatrix. I leaped from my couch, and it was then that I cursed myself for my folly in going naked even in the house of a friend. The fearsome sound died away, but its echoes filled the night.

I groped for the candle, and made a light. I seized my proper clothing, and scrambled into it with incredible swiftness, as if the horses were already trampling amongst the tents. But there was a powerful smell of burning in my nostrils, a stinging of the eyelids, and a gasping in my throat. As I rushed to my chamber door I heard the shouting of wild terror; and over all, the crackle, and roar of a fierce fire. I opened the door and looked below. The interior of the house was like an iron furnace, raging with heat, the flames leaping on the walls, and the stairway a blazing ruin. I might have been gazing into the valley of the son of Hinnom, so filled was it with vapour, and smoke, and fire. was nothing to be done. Descent by the stairway was impossible, unless I were merely resolute to cast away my life. I could stand it not an instant longer; but as I was about to retreat, a more fearsome crv rose above the sound of the fire:

"I have killed her," and the merchant, his white hair, and white night-clothes streaming behind, came flying down the corridor with soft pattering feet; "I have killed her!" and he leaped through the flaming stairway. I heard his body fall upon the floor below.

The merchant was killed. Beatrix was dead. The poor task before me was to save my own life, if I could. This was no time for reflection. My training in battle availed me now; for it taught me to act upon the instant. I gained my room and shut the door. I raised the sash for a breath of clean air, but the flames were after me. I leaped upon the sill, being impelled to escape that sharp kind of death; and, creeping outward, I found some support for my feet upon the bell-cast roof. By stretching my arms I secured a hold of the nearest of the dormer windows, and so made my way to the gable of the house.

Flames were bursting everywhere. Yet even now there was a choice, either to leap into the street, or to throw myself into the space, and darkness, over the end of the house. The front had nothing to recommend it; the end had the poor merit of uncertainty, and I chose that. I leaped; and judge of my surprise when I found that I was not killed. Indeed, I had suffered no injury beyond the strain of a sinew, or the small bone of my leg; and there I stood with my feet upon a substantial foundation, and a long line of level roofs before me.

I cast myself down upon my face, and crawled to the edge, where I continued to gaze into the street, like one in a trance. High clouds of filthy smoke arose; but as they were blown aside, I saw that the place was full of

men, and I could hear the trampling of feet, and the shouting of orders. Certain stout fellows were bearing two human burdens upon litters. Blinded by the smoke, and blaze, I could not determine if they were living or dead, much less could I discover their identity; but my heart misgave me sorely, and the sight made me fear and shudder. It was as if I had looked upon the great shadow which is in the deep gulf of death.

Next, a fearful crash filled the heavens; and, looking around, I beheld the house sink in, and then shoot up to the stars in an eruption of horrid, malicious, fire and flame. After that, all was darkness, and I was alone in the black night; the blackness of the sky, and of the earth, below, above, and surrounding me.

I looked into the vacancy where the house had been. It was like the great void in my own life. In that house I had found felicity. A new life had been born within me, and by reason of thinking upon it, my present evil was the harder to bear. A great longing seized me to follow Beatrix to the place in which she would be laid, and I dashed over the housetops seeking to descend; but as it was the night season, and the air filled with smoke, I could not come to it.

I had the remaining hours of darkness for meditation, and I communed with myself. Heaviness and sorrow were upon me, and I have to confess that I eased the burden by the weeping of tears. Morning was coming, and that brought the necessity for action, before which even the luxury of grief must give way. Death had released Gilbert Sherwyn from his obligation to the court. I was free, and though I had no blind lust for life, right or wrong, I had no intention of walking into

the den of those bloody and ruthless tyrants who sought to compass my destruction.

As I looked about for some means of descent, all nicety of conscience was destroyed in the effort to escape. My only thought was directed against arrest, and detention. I could not remain like an owl upon the housetops. I lifted a trap door and peered within. There was a convenient ladder, and I swung myself down. I found myself in a small closet; and, feeling for the door, withdrew the bolt. My situation differed nothing in appearance from that of a trespasser, yet I emerged with the full resolve to run through with my sword anyone who should oppose my passage out. There was no occasion to resort to so extreme a measure, for I was permitted to descend the stairs peaceably; and, having withdrawn the bolts of the street door, I passed out into freedom.

My mind was working, and the words of Master Walton, the lawyer, came back to me, that I should find a refuge in the house of Fess Knyvet, next to Michell's Church in the Corne Hill. A rabble of people were intent upon the smoking ruin of the Alderman's house, with no thought for a solitary wanderer like me. I passed from Lombard Street into Grace Church; thence by Fen Church, and Leaden Hall, I made a detour into the Corne Hill, and quickly found the house which I sought.

The daylight was coming when I knocked upon the door. There was a rattle of bolts, and sounds of halting footsteps within. The door opened as far as the chain would allow, and an old man thrust his face in the opening, but he had a weapon in his hand.

"Are you Fess Knyvet?" I demanded. The old

man's jaw was working, but no sounds came. I stared at him, and he clutched at his throat, as if there were a rope about his neck.

"Is this the house to which I was bidden by a Counsellor of the king?" I asked again.

"Captain Dexter," he addressed me with more composure, "I am Fess Knyvet, and this is my house. I am now an honest man, and I give you thanks."

"How then do you know that I am Captain Dexter?"

"This is not the first time I have looked upon your face."

"Your thanks I accept. For what you thank me I know not. Your honesty concerns me only in so far as you can give me a refuge, according to a promise made on your behalf."

"You need no promise. I am ever at your service," he assured me handsomely.

The friendly man had unfastened the door, and when I was within he made it secure again. Even had Master Walton notified him that my arrival might be expected, I was at a loss to know his reason for this noble offer of entertainment. As this curious host led the way, he disclosed a soldierly bearing, in spite of a considerable lameness in the right leg. He conducted me into a room at the back of the house, which was barred and barricaded like a fort, and with his own hand he set forth upon the table suitable food, a pullet and a cold tongue, with bread and drink. With sight of the food a faintness seized me; but, as I eat, I was soon restored, and ready for what might next befall.

"Did you think you saw a ghost when you opened the door?" I asked of my entertainer, who maintained a

respectful attitude at the opposite side of the deal table.

"It was my own ghost which terrified me," he said as if he were ashamed of having been overtaken. "I came near to being a ghost that day when you executed justice at the *Green Man*."

Upon the instant I recognized him as the landlord who stood before me that memorable evening, his black shoes shining with copper buckles of the best, his garters modish, and every garment fitting neatly, though I did think he would have cut a better figure with a horse between his knees.

"That was a notable adventure," I said, with a swift pain at my heart; "but I do not remember that I was guilty of laxity."

"Do you not remember that you left the execution of justice in the hands of Hugh Cornish?"

"I can discover no cause for gratitude in that."

"But he sought you out, and claimed one prisoner as his own. It was upon me that fate fell."

"Cornish ever had a whimsical humour. It pleased him to play the judge; but I never knew him to err on the side of leniency."

I bade my host to sit down, whilst I finished my meal, which was a small concession, seeing that he was in his own house, and I was a fugitive claiming his protection. Here was a man who might inform me of my old troopers, and I had a longing for their faithful comradeship.

"I should like to know how it is that you are here," I said when he had taken his place.

"Hugh Cornish committed the folly of holding a court of law."

"Not two days since, I myself escaped from a court of law. The thing is easier than I thought."

"It was easy for me," Knyvet went on, and the remembrance created a smile upon his face. "When I was brought in, the court had already been constituted. Hugh Cornish sat at the head of the table, and he and his troopers were taking comfort in drink and quarrelling."

"What was the subject of their debate?" I asked, for the proceedings of any court had a fascination for me.

"They were discussing what should be done with the prisoner if he were found to be not guilty. Cornish took that as a reflection upon his capacity as judge; but his companions would not let the trial proceed until he had admitted that the prisoner should be hanged in any case."

"That, I believe, was the usual arrangement in those times."

"The outlook was none too cheerful," Knyvet went on, "when Cornish, with great gravity and downcast eyes, asked me what reasons I had to put forward why I should not be hanged."

"If I remember aright, you must have been in some perplexity."

"I protested against the jurisdiction of the court."
"Upon what ground?"

"I protested formally against that mode of trial which was only permissible when there was no form of civil judicature in force in the land."

"And how was the protest received?" I asked with a longing that I might have witnessed the embarrassment of my men.

"Each member of the court exercised his privilege of making a speech. One said that, in the fact of making so acute an objection, I had spoken like a lawyer, and therefore had jeopardized my life. The youngest of your troopers addressed me, as if I were already condemned, and discoursed upon inattention to religion, and Sabbath-breaking. Cornish grew impatient, and ruled that the protest was disallowed, as there was no peace in the land."

"What objection did you offer next?"

"I urged that, upon his own ruling, things were in a state of war, that I was a king's soldier, engaged in the prosecution of a just cause; that the merchant whom we had attacked was engaged in carrying comfort to the enemy — to wit, a box of treasure."

"And how was this argument received?"

"It was admitted, and all agreed that I was to be tried as a prisoner of war."

"I should think that was sufficiently obvious," I said, "without so long an argument."

"Then I demanded that I should be tried according to the articles of Gustavus, and the military code of Arnheim. Hugh Cornish started as if he had been thrust with a pike. He lifted his eyes to my face for the first time. He stared, and rubbed his fierce moustaches against the grain; and, when he burst out with a great Dutch oath, I saw that the play was at an end."

My interest in the trial died away in the presence of a soldier so experienced that he saved his life out of Hugh Cornish's hands, and I knew that here was a man competent to advise me.

"Were you of his command whose name you used

with such good effect in Hugh Cornish's court?" I asked with much respect.

"I kept the field with him in winter and summer, and forced with him the passage of the Lech."

"Then you were in at the end?"

"Ay; I was under the hoofs of Pappenheim's cavalry, and helped to carry our dead leader from the field. Hugh Cornish was one of us." The old soldier arose. Tears were in his eyes.

"Give me your hand," said I; and in virtue of his tears over a lost cause we became as brothers. When his composure returned, I asked if he had any intelligence of my old companions.

"They have gone abroad into a less disciplined service," he replied. "Hugh Cornish has fallen into evil courses; and, if there were roads on the sea, he might be called a highwayman."

"I am glad that you have been led into an honest and peaceable way of life," I said, "especially since it bears profit to myself."

"This wound of my leg, which I had in that adventure, assisted to that good end," the old highwayman admitted with a sparkle of the eye; and he added with warmth: "peaceable — yes; of honesty I make no boast; but I think you will admit the usefulness of my trade."

"We shall be obliged to put it to the test. I am under a warrant of law, and flying for my life."

"It is my proper business to attend to those matters. You are free to command me; for you are a worthy man to obey."

"What means then have you at command?"

"Pray do not question me," the old man said earnestly.

"My business is a complicated concern; and what you do not know of it will not hurt you."

"I shall then state my case to you, and leave it to your own judgement."

"I only desire to know what path you would pursue. Of the rest you are free to speak or keep silence." The old soldier was so cordial that I disclosed the whole matter to him — my arrest and detention, my appearance in the court, and my release by the unexpected magnanimity of Gilbert Sherwyn.

"I think that once before I heard that name," the old highwayman said, when I had mentioned my benefactor. "I think also he had a daughter; and, if I remember aright, it was her fair young face in the moonlight and her trusting eyes which saved her father's life — besides the help which you, and your troopers, were able to give."

With his remembrance of the little Beatrix my pain returned. I told him of my stay in the Alderman's house, and of the awful disaster of fire. His face glowed with sympathy, when he was seized with a knowledge of the situation.

"In matters of war, of the road, or the evasion of offensive duties, I could tender you some experience; but in the delicate business of love I can only testify my willingness to serve."

"Do you then proceed to Lombard Street, and glean such intelligence as you can."

He made some alteration in his dress. He took a staff in his hand, and, having showed me to a room where was a couch, and bade me open the door to no one, he emerged from the house as an infirm and aged man. When I was left alone, I fell into an utter lowness of heart. I lay as one bound hand and foot, tossing to and fro. This then was the end of all things; of the cause for which I had fought, of my short day's happiness; and the dawn of love fled back into the darkness from which it had so hardly emerged. My punishment was great for coveting a life of ease, and quietness, with Beatrix, instead of casting it away in the vain effort to right the evil which is in the world. But at length came a sense of reward, in that I had been permitted to enter into that holy place, where Love dwelleth with her handmaiden Sorrow.

CHAPTER IX

All that long morning I spent like a torpid bear in a hole; but, towards the afternoon, Fess Knyvet returned with an air of great business.

"Have you learned anything which is of interest to me?" I cried, my spirits reviving with his show of activity.

"I learned that you spoke the truth in respect of the disaster of fire which overtook Gilbert Sherwyn's house in Lombard Street."

"Did any escape, who might give some account of what occurred?" I asked the question in hope that none remained to tell of the merchant's fearful deed.

"I was not so free to make enquiries as you are of me; but I observed that the king's officers were diligently searching the ruins."

"For me?" I cried with a new interest in my past life.

"I professed no concern for you. I was there in the character of a man who was a creditor of the merchant, and I was not alone. The report is that he was ruined in his affairs."

"Were not even the bodies rescued from the flames?" I asked with the desire that I might possess a locality upon which I should ever after fasten my remembrance.

"The dead merchant was carried out, scarcely touched by the fire."

"What of his daughter?" I made shift to utter. The old man covered his eyes with his hand.

"She lies by his side in the house of a neighbour," he said, "and I have here the Bill of Mortality for the day. Their names are written within."

"Then I shall go to her," I cried, with a new accession of grief.

"You would recognize nothing," he said, placing a restraining hand upon my shoulder. "Besides, your arrest would be certain."

"I crave to know, before I leave England for ever, the place where her body will be laid."

"That I could not discover. They may have a place of sepulture in the country. If not, it will be in the churchyard of the Parish of Michell's which lies hard by."

"Then I may witness the burial." So slight a chance now seemed a great mercy to me.

"And I shall witness your burial and my own hanging, if we do not bestir ourselves," said my entertainer with blunt sincerity. "I am sorry to withdraw your mind from contemplation; but there is business to be done, if either of us is to escape."

"I am ready for any adventure which you propose," I cried with sudden alacrity, for the desire for life is strong.

"That is all I ask. I feared some manifestation of folly. Sir Harry Vane might this day be upon the high seas instead of in the Tower, did he not hold his life in such contempt."

"How did you learn this?"

"I spoke with Counsellor Walton at Mother Lam's. My enterprise is difficult enough. If you are going to

lie down as Harry Vane did, I shall cast you in the street, and deny that I ever knew you. And I have good reason," he added merrily, as he saw me leap to my feet with sudden resolution, "for I hold your treasure in my hands."

"My treasure! This is no time for jesting."

"The time for jesting is when danger is greatest. But there is no danger when gold is in the house."

"Beyond my pay I have seen no gold since I left my father's house."

"Then you have not wasted your inheritance, and you are like to see it in a pile." With much glee Knyvet drew a paper from his breast, and presented it to me. I saw it was a bill upon the Goldsmith's Company for such a sum as I had never dreamt of, nor seen, unless it were when a regiment of soldiers was about to be paid, but when I found that the bill was drawn in the name of Fess Knyvet, a foolish sense of disappointment came over me. I knew that he was provided with means which he might apply to furthering my escape; but, when he assured me that it was all my own, my confusion was something to see, and I demanded an explanation of so great wealth.

"I know nothing of the matter," said he, "beyond the fact that it was given to me by Master Walton, and he informed me that it was yours, in virtue of an order which you had signed upon the Court of Chancery, when he spoke with you at Mother Lam's."

"This passes all reason. What am I to do with it?"

"The bill is drawn in my name for greater secrecy; but if you come to my cellar, we shall convert it into coin."

With much ceremony he drew the ashes from the hearth; and, with the aid of a bar of iron, and a pulley, he caused a huge stone to remove from its place. This operation disclosed an opening through which we were able to descend into the earth. When my guide lighted the candles, I found that we stood in a great storehouse which was filled with casks, and cases, and parcels, liquors from Cognac, laces from Valenciennes, and the spoil of the silk-worm from the mills of Lyons. In one corner was a workroom with all kinds of tools and furnaces, and I surveyed the rich scene in astonishment. It was not within my rights to ask questions, so I followed Knyvet to his strong-box, which he opened. He drew out a heavy bag, and poured the contents upon a table in a stream of golden Elizabeth Angels. counted them over, but was not satisfied. He took his balances, and weighed out a small wedge of gold, and completed the operation with a handful of fine grains.

"What am I to do with this wealth?" I cried, as I surveyed the miscellaneous pile.

"That is for you to decide. But I may offer you some advice. When you go out into the world, do not go naked. Money answers all things. Take it with you. It will prove a safe companion."

"But how shall I bestow such a random heap?"

"I shall explain that too." Then he lit a furnace, and cast the mass into a pot. The fire roared, and the pot bubbled. He turned a thumb-screw, and the golden liquor ran into a channel near a yard long. He seized the mass with his pincers; and, placing it upon an anvil, he beat it into a neat bar, which could be bent with the

hands when it was cooled. Whilst my companion was so engaged, he worked rapidly, and I could only wonder at his skill in this new kind of metallurgy. Then he took a side of smooth leather, and began to fashion a wide double belt, and put the gold within. As he placed the stitches with all the ease of a practised shoemaker, I could no longer restrain my speech.

"You appear to have learned many trades," I said in admiration of his deftness.

"On occasion they are useful, and they do not jostle each other."

"The greatest feat which you have performed is to extract this treasure from a lawyer. I hope you allowed Master Walton to reward himself for all his labour."

"He is a man who will do himself no injustice."

"I trust that you have not forgotten yourself."

"I have enough," said this honest man, as he surveyed his stores, "without robbing you to whom I owe my life." With this he finished the belt, and did not rest satisfied until I had placed it about my loins. The weight was grievous, above twenty pounds, and I made as if to lay it aside.

Fess Knyvet arose, and lifting his finger in admonition, he addressed me: "Young man, learn to love this companion; it will never deceive you. You are going into the world. Neither affirm, nor deny; neither promise, nor refuse." With this we sought the upper world again.

It was now the evening, and as we sat down to some refreshment a bell sounded in our ears from the church steeple, which almost overshadowed the house. It rang nine times. We uncovered our heads and stood up.

"That," said Fess Knyvet, "is the knell for a man."
There was a pause, and the bell began again. This
time it stopped when six strokes were sounded.

"That," said I, "is the knell for a woman."

Silence fell between us, till we heard a procession approaching. I hurried to an upper window, and the good man left me to myself. First came a hearse carried by eight men. It was covered with black velvet edged with white linen, a foot broad; and, so ample was it, the bearers were almost hidden to the waists. This was the pall of a man. The attendants wore white scarfs, and gloves. These were the emblems of mourning for a man in office.

Next came a maiden carrying a garland in her hand; and, after her, two companions who bore baskets of flowers, and scattered them in the way. Then followed another gloomy box, with two hanging ribbons of black to signify the mortal state, and two of white, which are fit emblems of purity and innocence. The ends were held by four young maids, and the pall was white in token of virginity.

The mournful procession passed on its way. I flew to the door, but my guardian was before me, and with kind restraint forbade me to pass. I returned to my place at the window, and though I could not see, I heard the gravel fall. Truly it was a great grief; but I had to bear it. I know not how, but I did bear it.

That night, in defiance of all caution, I escaped from the house; and having scaled the wall, I spent a valuable hour within. In the darkness I found the new-made graves; and, groping dimly, I caught in my hands sprigs of sweet flowers which I have kept precious all these years — the rosemary, the polyanthus, the mignonette, the thyme, and camomile. My senses were in a tumult. I cast myself upon the sod, and lay in silence, I know not for how long. At length I heard a rustling sound. There was music in my ears, and a Presence filled the air with light. Then I knew that I had set my affection upon things of this earth, and that in very truth they were taken away. Now there was naught for me, save the rest upon that bed which is reserved for us all, when this long pilgrimage is over. I was aroused from my lethargy by the grasp of a firm hand upon my shoulder. It was Fess Knyvet who had come to seek me. He conducted me back to his house.

"This is no time for self-indulgence," he said gently. "You are being earnestly sought for. You must go forth to-night. Your escape is assured."

"I am in your kind hands, and promise obedience so far as my strength will permit," I protested humbly, for I could not remain longer in that house where I had suffered so much. I would rather hazard all, than remain cooped up like a rat in a hole.

"Your departure is well arranged. I have advice that there are lying in Delfshaven certain ships waiting for a fair wind. These will join with others lying under the Isle of Wight, and some at Plymouth."

"But all the ports are watched."

"The watchers also are watched," said Knyvet hastily, "with shining gold in their hands to blind their eyes."

"I shall follow to the letter such directions as you have to give."

"There are no directions beyond this. You will be

in front of the Black Horse, at the Bridge-foot, one hour past midnight. You will walk through the covered roadway, and wait upon the second archway past the middle with your stick at the slope, until your guide comes up."

"Will my guide know who I am?" I asked in some concern for his honesty in presence of my belt of gold.

"He only knows that the price of your passage to a convenient port is well and truly paid, and that his future employment depends upon his present industry."

"Then I can trust him fully?"

"Trust no one. Ask no questions; and, above all, answer none. These are safe rules in such delicate negotiations."

Knyvet thereupon brought forth a ruffianly disguise, and helped to cover my proper garments. The watch went by crying: "Past midnight, and a rainy morning." My kind and competent entertainer joined hands with me in a vigorous clasp, and pushed me without the door.

When I came in the street I had reason to think that the watch spoke truth in respect of the rain, but the inclement weather favoured my escape. The false garb which I wore caused me shame, but I trudged along, and took up my station at the appointed place. Presently a heavy foot-fall resounded in the covered way, and a man emerged out of the long stretch of darkness. There was enough light from a lantern to show that he was a mariner, and a most sordid fellow.

"Follow me," he growled out, as he passed by, and I did as I was bidden, though I would more cheerfully have brought down my stout staff upon his head.

We crossed the bridge, and descended to the water's

edge. The sailor gave a low cry, and a small boat with a man at the oars shot out from beneath an archway. We stepped into the craft. The oarsman pushed off. The stream caught us, and we went whirling down the black tide until we must have come to the Long Reach. Here I was set ashore, and the two men went off again upon the river in the darkness. Not a word was spoken, and I feared that I had been deceived in my conductors. However, they soon returned, and I embarked once more. At no great distance was a small ketch, and we lay along-side. The sailor lifted himself on board. I followed, and the man at the oars took his heavy way against the tide, leaving me alone again with my guide.

The sullen, dogged fellow rummaged about till he found a fisherman's suit like his own, which he handed to me. When the change was effected, he took the disguise which I had worn, and putting it in a bag with a stone, sunk all to the bottom of the river. Then he hoisted the sail, groping for the ropes in the darkness, and cursing to himself, as he performed his task. And so, with wind, and tide, and rain, we made good speed down the river. When we must have reached Gravesend, a black frigate blocked the way, and from its shelter a boat shot out to know our business. The seaman brought the ketch to a halt.

"We have no business," he cried; "we are merely taking the air at this convenient hour."

"Then I shall exercise the right of search," the voice answered out of the night.

"Search if you will," the mariner cried hotly, with most injurious language, and scandalous reflections upon the honour of the searcher's female-kind. The boat came alongside, and the officer peered into the ketch by the light of a lantern which he had in his hand. When he perceived that we were equipped for fishing, and looked miserable enough, he bestowed a curse or two upon us in return, and went back to his watch, pursued by the scoffs and jests of my uncivil companion. When the morning broke we were well out of the river. The wind had slackened, and afforded the mariner some leisure from his ropes, and he cast off his surly demeanour.

"We shall make sail for the coast of France," he said, "where I have some business. Upon our return I shall set you down upon the South coast, where you may join the ships from Delfshaven."

"That was not my understanding with your employer," I said, for I was angry as well as afraid; and, being well clear of England, I had no desire to be cast back again.

"Fess Knyvet sits at his ease, but I am master here. I shall not spend a week battling up to Delfshaven, when another course will serve as well."

"I am no better off in the ports of France than I am here. My design is to reach Delfshaven, and I shall see to it that you keep to the bargain."

"If you begin to threaten, I shall up stick, and put you ashore on the steps of Whitehall."

"Before you make that landing I shall rend your head with this handspike," said I, as I seized that convenient weapon.

"I am no lawyer," he answered fearlessly; "but, as I see it, you cannot be master and fugitive in the same time. If you do not like the course which I steer, you are free to get out and walk. It is not

from you, or from Fess Knyvet either, that I take my last orders."

In spite of this unseemly bickering, the man did not cease to watch. He grew silent again, and following the direction of his gaze, I could descry upon the horizon a fleet of sails.

"These be the king's ships," he declared after a long scrutiny. "They are offensive to me for one reason; to you, for another, and we must shift our course whether we like it or not."

The ruse which we were practising might do well enough in the darkness; but in the morning light, and far from the river's mouth, we should surely be questioned. I was obliged to sit still, and leave the direction of affairs in other hands than my own. So, all ground of difference between us being removed by this new danger, the sailor shifted his helm and sail, and headed down the Kentish coast. We became quite cheerful as the day wore on. My companion revealed that he had some good parts, and towards evening he went so far as to sing a loose song. After all, it was a pleasant day spent in that light way of travelling in the free air, but I began to be apprehensive of the night which was now falling with mist.

"This should be the place," said the master of the ketch with decision.

"What place?" I asked, in search of information even if it were false.

"The Romeny Marsh, where I can promise you seclusion and quiet."

The name had a bad sound. My bones might lie in that morass till the last day, and none be the wiser;

therefore it became me to be upon my guard. As we approached the shore a light moved slowly to and fro. The sailor sent up a small flare in reply, and continued his course into what appeared to be a small bay, or the mouth of a river. Guided by the light we effected a landing, and a cheerful voice hailed us out of the darkness.

"Comrades, I give you good welcome."

"Comrade — that is as it may be," said I, as I leaped ashore.

"This is a resolute fellow," my shipmate protested most handsomely; "and, I believe, is worthy to share in our adventures."

"And what is the nature of your business?" I enquired.

"As you have seen, escorting regicides and renegades over seas, selling good liquors cheap to those who need them, and fine silks to such as are fond of luxury."

"I would learn further of the companionship which I should enjoy," I said, not wishing for an immediate quarrel.

"That is not unreasonable," the stranger assured me. "Do you meditate upon our proposal, until we return," and the two men entered the ketch. They pushed off into deeper water, and I could hear their hearty oaths as they made all snug. I had abundant leisure for meditation, as they were in no haste to return.

I sat down upon a stone and surveyed my situation. It was not over cheerful. I was alone. Beatrix was dead, and the past was dead too. The most which I could expect was to go forth into the wilderness, or roam over the seas. Honest employment was denied me, and though I had no desire to become a robber, I under-

stood the situation of Fess Knyvet, who, when his term of service was over, joined the highwaymen at the *Green Man* in their attack upon the merchant in his coach.

All things had become unreal — honesty and the cause for which I fought, love which had been vouchsafed to me for a moment's space, and had been taken away. One thing at least was real - my belt of gold, as real as the hard stone upon which I was seated. Here at last was something upon which I might rely. A career of adventure in which I could mind my own pleasure opened up in alluring vistas. On the instant there stole into my heart a secret fear lest this much-prized reality should be filched away, lest it might cost me my life. I was afraid. The belt of gold was strangling my virtue. I cast off the fisherman's coat of rough canvas, as if it had been the skin of a serpent. I felt of my proper clothing to know if this were the Nicholas Dexter who once exercised command in the thick of battle, and now was afraid for his life and his treasure.

The temptation passed. I arose, filled with elation that I was myself again; rejoicing also that I had my feet upon the earth, instead of lurking in secret places like an obscene creature, or a beast of prey. The only weight which I felt was the girdle of leather and gold about my loins; and, in my new-found reliance upon myself alone, I came within a little of casting that burden into the sea. Also the sea was making a friendly noise in the dark, as if it would come up and lick my feet, but could not. Ever afterwards I loved it, for the comfort which it gave me in that hour of sordid temptation.

Yet these outlaw men had shown a confidence in me by inviting me to share their adventures. They had revealed their plans. How would they regard a refusal? Let them look to it. I sought the hilt of my weapon and eased my belt, so that the lump of a pistol was comfortable to the heel of my fist. The two men came crunching the shingle along the water's edge, and they found me in a posture of defence for whatever might befall.

"This life is not for me." said I. "Rest and refreshment for the night, and in the morning a continuance of our journey is all which I crave."

"You shall have all reasonable quiet in the Romeny Marsh, and you will like it so well that you will have no desire to leave us."

"I cannot accompany you upon these terms," I protested.

"At any rate you may have entertainment for the night. Follow us."

The seaman led the way, his companion followed, and I brought up the rear. We broke through the woods, which were only a fringe skirting the shore. Then we came into a hideous morass, which we traversed with much difficulty by a narrow path. After half an hour of hard travelling I saw in the distance a habitation blazing with lights, and sounds of revelry came down the heavy air. As we came nearer to the den of these desperate fellows, I was cured for ever of any desire for an outlaw life. The sounds of idiot laughter increased, and my companions could not restrain their desire to be sharers in the revel. They went at a run, heedless that I was ignorant of the path, but I followed

as well as I could. Of a sudden the coze caught my footsteps and I came into a slough which almost swallowed me up. When I had scrambled out, I was hopelessly bewildered. My companions shouted aloud, but I made no reply; for I concluded to pass the night in the open, rather than face the unknown dangers which might lurk in that house of mirth. I could endure as I was till the morning light.

Without seeking, I found a path and followed it. But by this time the sky had grown thick with black clouds which lay almost on the tops of the trees, and joined the exhalations from the morass. Horrid distillations filled the air, and foul vapours blinded my eyes. An owl screeched, and flapped his wings. A night-monster was the most cheerful beast which I might hope to encounter. This, then, was their ruffian plot, to leave me to perish at my leisure. But I resolved that it should not be so. Spent though I was with sleepless nights, and sorrow, and the sense of danger, I kept a stout heart, and in the end came to the spot where the ketch lay moored.

My desire for escape, I knew not where, was so strong upon me that I entered the water; and, as the tide had gone down, by wading deep I came to the side of the little ship. My harness, and weapons, and store of gold were a burden to me, so that I had much to do to gain the upper side. When at length I attained to it, I was at a still greater loss how to proceed, for my mind had always been occupied with men and horses, retrenchments and tenailles, infalls and camisadoes, rather than with those things which pertain to a ship.

Outside the shelter of the bay the wind was blowing,

and the sea began to roar. After much fumbling I made shift to hoist a piece of sail, and in my haste to be off I sundered the cord of the killock with my sword. The ketch darted now in one direction, then in another, but with no set purpose, till I bethought me of the tiller by which even great ships are rendered to obedience. Truly the sea was not my element, and the one thought in my mind was a longing for the companionship of the Apostle Paul, who must have been a noble seaman, or for Phineas Pratt.

When I came clear of the bay a fearful storm of wind caught the sail, and I was carried along, in the roaring dark, as it were, on the back of a black demon, with all the fiends in the pit let loose at his tail. Whether it might please God to drown me or save me. I was resolute to hold the helm fast, so I let the ketch drive according to the wind, and kept the tiller in my hand all that night through. When the day broke, the sea was like a pot of ointment, boiling and bubbling. The long waves were sliding here and there. A raining scud, and spume of mist, shut me out from the world in cold and wet and hunger. But soon there was a shiver of flame in the East, with beams of light which poured over the waste like a second flood, and chased away the fog to the hills, which now lay at some distance on my right hand. What my situation was I could not tell, but the wind was falling, and with my back to the rising sun I sped along merrily, glad of the warmth and brightness. I was sailing to the westward, and that was a good omen. So I carried on all day, the wind holding, and the shore at no great distance.

About the going down of the sun I neared an island which must have been the Isle of Wight, and here I beheld at the Cowes a good-sized ship riding at anchor with three or four smaller vessels lying close in company. It leaped into my mind that this might be part of the fleet which Master Walton said was ready to sail for New England, that which it was my plot to have overtaken.

As I drew near the largest ship to have speech of it, without committing to anyone my ulterior business, I observed a man on the deck, who was regarding me earnestly with a perspective glass. My appearance must have been sordid enough, but he made me a signal to advance. By a manœuvre of the helm, in which, as I have said, I had no great skill, I held towards him. But the ketch acquiring new speed, I dashed into the ship's side. My design of reticence was frustrated, for I was thrown into the water by the shock, and, whether I would or no, I was speedily drawn up to the deck by means of a long pole with a bent iron in the end.

CHAPTER X

1

I stood upon the deck with streams flowing from me as if I were a water-spaniel, and I suffered from the knowledge that I looked ridiculous. The man who had been regarding me so curiously with a perspective glass came to the front, and found some amusement in my situation. I stared at him in return, and blinked the water from my eyes.

He was a man above the middle age, with a well-knit frame, and an easy carriage of body. His countenance was of the colour, and toughness of rich leather, and his eyes looked like newly fractured iron. His face was defended by a great store of black hair, and his head was covered only by its own grizzled thatch. Though he showed in every line, and feature, and movement, that he was the ship's master, his dress was one of extreme simplicity—a seaman's shirt, belted at the waist and open at the throat, exposing his sinewy neck. His widespread legs were encased in leathern breeches, which were thrust into the tops of huge seaboots.

"It is clear, young man, that your business is not on the sea," were his first words, "if I may judge by the manner of your coming into my ship." His voice was musical, like a woman's, and in strange contrast with his rough garb and appearance. In addition, there was a quality in his tone, and a play of expres-

sion upon his face, which for one fleeting instant agitated me strangely, such is the inexplicable operation of the mind of a man.

"This method of coming into your ship is as little to my liking as it is to yours," I said with irritation; for it stung me like a nettle that I had made so poor a figure upon my first entry into the new world of a ship.

"Then perhaps you will show equal alacrity in betaking yourself off my deck." His words snapped like the click of a pistol.

"My suspicions, then, are justified," I said with a confidence which was engendered by my belt of gold.

"By what right do you venture to suspect?" he continued with a rising voice, and a hardness of the eyes. "You are standing upon my deck, to which you were not bidden to come."

"I suspect the character which you assume; for an honest trader never refuses a profitable venture." It was as well to have the thing over, and I waited for his reply with a fearless front. But no reply came; for at that moment a small cutter hailed the deck, and the seaman turned about to know what it meant. Three men were in the boat which was now alongside, and two smooth fellows climbed to the deck with incredible nimbleness.

"What is your business?" the master asked sharply, as he removed a straight sail-needle from his mouth, which he had been employing as a tooth-picker.

"Do you carry any passengers hence?" one of the visitors enquired, I thought with great politeness.

"I carry whom I will. I am ready to sail, and I

have no mind to carry you, unless it be in irons in the hold."

"We have here a warrant from the king to search all the vessels leaving these ports."

"Nothing pleases me better than to hear that you are king's officers. I judged that you were Popish spies or other evil emissaries. Produce your warrant." The principal of the two men produced a document from which he began to read.

"Let me have a reading of that paper," said the master, snatching it from his hand; "it may rouse me from my lethargy." The man handed the warrant to him, and he perused it with great diligence. His face grew merry, and he read it again. Then he began to recite aloud the names which were specifically mentioned. His glee became uncontrollable, as he repeated aloud "Nicholas Dexter," and I thought my hour had come.

"You need tarry no longer," said the master, now grown strangely calm.

"Do you refuse the demands of our warrant?" cried the men in one voice.

"I dislike being catechised. I have also a dislike to seeing cloven hoofs on this deck of sweet pine wood."

The shipmaster tore the paper across, and cast it in their faces. He fell into a passion; and declared that he hoped God would manifest His works upon him, if he allowed any king, save Him who made the sea, to come within his ship. With this he seized an officer in either hand, and heaved them backwards over the bulwarks into the sea, whence they had difficulty to extricate themselves, and clamber into their

boat. A pipe sounded, and a crew of men came tumbling up the hatches; whereupon this strange man grew calm again, and taking me by my wet arm, he led me away towards his little room.

"My infirmity is this," he said as we walked together, "yielding to passion and the uttering of words in the unseemly manner which you have seen."

Though his language was extreme and beyond the necessities of the case, it coincided so well with my own view that I was disposed to regard the offence with more leniency than I otherwise might.

"This form of speech is not new to me," I said to lessen his embarrassment; "for I had once in my command four troopers who had been bred in the Dutch wars."

"I know that speech," he answered promptly. "It lacks fluidity; it is fit only for marauders, and midnight revels. The sea has a language of its own."

"Do you estimate that I could acquire some skill?" I asked humbly.

"I fear not. It is a gift like singing; it must come from the heart."

The stranger went to a locker as we came within, and brought out a change of clothing for me, oiled leather breeches, and a sleeved waistcoat of green cloth bound with tape; for my garments were ruined by the salt water. He ordered a healthy-looking lad to set food upon the table, which he did smartly, but indifferently well. This thing yet remains a mystery to me — why sea-cooks must hang the dish clout above the box which contains the coals.

It was the usual hour for the evening meal, and we

sat in together. I was not aware at the time that it was contrary to the custom of the sea to ask questions, but my conduct fitted well with the rule, and the stranger laid my hesitancy to reflection and modesty.

"You are a circumspect young man," said he; "but there is no need of circumspection or round-about speech in your present company. I know your enemies, and enmity to them is bond enough between us."

"You have judged rightly," I assured him with much cordiality. "I am a fugitive from my country. The end of my desire is to reach New England. But I did not think to find so competent a friend to set me upon the journey."

"It is my business to further travel thence, and at the same time serve any man who fought for freedom. I have this ship upon the sea, and ketches upon the river, which have freighted many a valuable passenger to her side."

"I came in a ketch from the river," said I, beginning to wonder.

"How is it then," he asked, "that you came alone in this sordid way of travelling? I am even now expecting a store of passengers from Delfshaven, or the coast of France. Those were the orders which I gave in respect of all who now desire to remove from London."

The man stirred uneasily in his seat, as if it were his custom to be obeyed. My own wonder began to grow at the greatness of the plot, and it explained the ease with which my escape was managed. Also the merriment of the men in the Romeny Marsh had a meaning to me.

"I had a desperate adventure with outlaw men on

the coast of Kent," I said with some shame in my face. "I trust they were none of yours."

"They are lewd wags," the stranger said with amusement in his voice. "It may have been that they used you in a spirit of lightness, but they only meant to indulge their humour."

"God forgive me. I might have slain them to the last man."

"Small danger. They are wayward, turbulent, young men, and shall die by no worthier hand than that of the hangman. Yet they are useful fellows and good merchants. They pay promptly, and are an encouragement to free trading."

"Are they then of our party?" I enquired with wonder.

"They are of no party. They exercise a spirit of neutrality, and care less for principles than for the good money which they earn for every passenger whom they bring safely out. They are now in wait for a heavy reward which I have promised, if they will deliver to me a man who is in sore need of such help."

"Who is this man? It may be that I can give you some advice of him."

"Captain Nicholas Dexter is his name."

"But I am Nicholas Dexter."

"And my name is Phineas Pratt. This ship is the New Covenant!"

"I have heard that name from the mouth of the executioner of God's judgement," I cried, and arose from my place to give respect.

"From Oliver himself?" demanded Captain Pratt, also arising, and taking my hand. He could not

restrain himself from making that demonstration, so great was his emotion.

"He spoke much, and often, of you."

"Did he speak of me in anger that I failed him?"

"He spoke of you, lamenting that you were dead, since the task which he had entrusted to you remained undone. That was all the proof which he needed. And yet," I continued, as I began to recollect the circumstances of our interview, "some doubt must have remained in his mind, for I heard him threaten to enquire into the whole matter, even if he had to let the light into every dungeon in Spain."

With the mention of the word Captain Pratt passed under the influence of a still stronger emotion, as when the fountain of a man's memory breaks through. He paced the length of the small cabin, and cursed away the boy who came to remove the dishes.

"I was dead," he cried, his iron-grey eyes glowing to a dull red; "but now I am alive, as God's enemies, and mine, shall one day know."

The healthy boy came back with a serene countenance, and did his work as cheerfully as if his spirits had not been wounded. He placed liquors upon the board, smoking-pipes, and plenty of the unclean plant to keep them alight.

"And so you are willing to adventure something with me," said Captain Pratt, when we were comfortable once more.

"A ship is a new world to me, yet I could desire no better company than a man whom my Lord General trusted."

"You may find upon fuller enquiry several who

will be more familiar to you, and equally to be trusted."

"I have a belt of gold," said I, "which came to me by inadvertence. It was in respect of that I spoke, when I proposed adventuring with you."

"How you came by it possesses no interest for me, beyond the interest which we all find in deeds of violence. I would feel its weight." I loosed the belt and laid it upon the table. Captain Pratt examined it nicely, and balanced it with care.

"Whoever did this bit of workmanship knew his business," said he with admiration.

"It was Fess Knyvet, near Michell's Church, Corne Hill."

"He deserves well of me. It was he who brought us together, and now I propose that you embark your-self, and your treasure, in the *Covenant* as one of our company."

"For my small store of treasure I agree. For myself I had a notion to live a civil life of quietness in New England, where, I am informed by Harry Vane, there is useful work to be done towards harmony and agreement."

"The New England affair is a complicated concern. I take no part in their schemes of religion, as I have no skill in the doctrines which are now agitating the little community. You will have time enough whilst the *Covenant* is refitting in the river behind Salem to acquire knowledge at first hand, and so shape your course by what you will have learned. In my judgement you will find the *Covenant* a more congenial home."

"Men and horses, and the language of cannon I know, but the sea is a new element. It may be that I shall

acquire knowledge of it also on our voyage outward, likewise of the company in which you are so friendly as to bid me enter."

"With the sea I am content," he assured me. "The Covenant is my home, and none other do I crave; but I cannot say as much of all my company. It is hard to find men for such adventures as ours who are sufficiently imbued with the spirit of religion, and sobriety."

"I had not thought that you were engaged in an enterprise of religion," I said in some perplexity at the dark saying.

"I am a plain man," said Captain Pratt, "and do not go beyond the obvious meaning of things; but I was early impressed with the excellency of that scripture wherein is commended the captain who could say to his crew 'Go' and they went, 'Come' and they came. This teaching is of value also in regulating affairs of the sea, and by observing it I have been able to accomplish something."

"You must have a zealous and forcible company?" I said in order to gain further knowledge.

"I have two sorts of men. Some, to the number of a score, are grave and sober men; the others are moved only by the love of gain, but they shall be winnowed out when I have good leisure; and, unless I am deceived, the separation shall be done by fire and the rope."

The seriousness of Captain Pratt's demeanour, and the sobriety of his speech, comported so ill with his language, when he addressed the king's officers, and again when he reproved the boy who would bear away the dishes, that I was resolved to satisfy myself by enquiring further.

"When first I came into your ship I judged from the language which you employed that your whole company was a crew of marauders and revellers, like those in the Romeny Marsh."

"You do them an injustice," Captain Pratt broke in. "Doubtless I did speak with feeling. My infirmity is this — yielding to passion," he said again humbly; "but if any of my crew are led aside by my example, I endeavour to perform my duty by them, so that they may avoid the sign of anger."

"I laid your vehemence to the nature of your business, and I feared that I could never attain to any skill in that branch of seamanship."

"Skill!" he cried with new energy. "Wait till occasion warrant. Wait till the wind dies down, and the matches are burning above the holes, when the boarding nets are up, and yard-arm lies up to yard-arm, then you will have no cause to lament my slowness of speech. When I lie awake by night, or tread my deck in the darkness, a torrent flows through my brain and I cannot refrain from utterance. I say this to you, lest you might convict me of impropriety in using words out of their proper season."

"And do you find easement thereby?" I enquired in wonder at this strange man.

"Else would I break a tube in my brain. When I look up into the heavens, and think what I and mine have endured, thoughts come into my head and words into my mouth which would choke me did I not find speedy relief."

"I should not like," I confessed, "to be a partner in using force to gratify a passion which I did not share, nor even for acquiring treasure alone, though I am willing to gain experience, and a competency, in some ordinarily honest way."

"I am not laying down a line of conduct for you," he said, "I am explaining my own; and before we become partners, I must mention that searching for treasure is a minor portion of my plot. I have a thing in mind which allows me no easement, either by day or by night."

"I would learn as much of it as you are free to state," I said kindly, for I saw that he was in distress.

"It is to accomplish something against the Spaniard; I have all the reason which a man could desire."

"If I knew that reason, it might be that I could do something to aid you, if not by furthering your design, at least by restraining your conduct within due bounds."

"It may be that I go to extremes," he confessed. "At times I am afraid of myself. I earnestly desire your company. You are no stranger to me, as I hope to show by my trust in you."

"It must be some bitter thing which prompts you to go to such extremes," I said, hoping to hear the recital of his adventures, before committing my future to his hands.

"It is a long time since," Captain Pratt began, as he opened up the matter, "and beyond my memory, but my mother was diligent to keep it in my mind, that my father, making a modest venture in the Levant, being come into the harbour of Gibraltar, anchored close to a French privateer, so near that he was able

to show him some discourtesy by word and gesture. It happened, innocently enough, that the Vicar of the Pope, with a boat-load of his black minions, came off to the Frenchman, and this so excited my father that he slipped his cable and ran them down. The Alcalde sent off a body of men to arrest him, but as they came near, a shower of shot was their welcome, and, as they persisted, several were helped on board, and put in irons. At the same time some of my father's men who were disporting themselves on shore were seized, and carried before the chief magistrate. My father then swore that he would hang his prisoners in irons unless his crew were freed, and he was so earnest that his men were given up.

"In the morning his anger was not abated, and he could not abstain from attacking the Frenchman, which he did. But the guns of the fortress were turned upon him; and, having effected his purpose, he made sail. As he sped out of the bay it was his ill-fortune to encounter a strong force from Cadiz, and, though he did what he could, his ship was seized, and his ensign torn down, and trailed over the Spaniard's stern. His men were condemned, and he himself was put into a dungeon for near two years.

"After this he was arraigned, and a certain Spaniard, using most vile words against my father's sovereign, he flew at him, and gave him a blow. Thereupon he was accused to the Inquisition, and committed again to prison, wherein he suffered cruel torments, and afflictions, the end of the matter being that he was taken to Seville and there burned to death.

"My mother, on hearing of this, took me from my bed

and made me swear with my childish lips to recompense to the best of my ability what my father had borne at the hands of those ravaging wolves, which I tried to do; but my zeal in that cause led me to neglect another charge which was laid upon me by the Lord General, and my country. I had bitter punishment for it; but I am not dead yet, nor will be, till I have discharged both trusts together."

CHAPTER XI

When Captain Pratt had come to this point in his narrative, I became suddenly conscious of great sounds—the swift trampling of feet, the clank of chains, and the complaining of the pulleys in their blocks. The report of a distant cannon pierced the night air with a language which I knew, and a ball came hurtling through our tops. It was followed by a voice adjuring the Deity in the Dutch tongue. Captain Pratt leaped to his feet with the report of the gun, and I to mine, for the voice was the voice of Hugh Cornish. There was no mistaking it. I had heard it too often in the hurly-burly of battle to mistake it now.

Captain Pratt had vanished into the darkness of the deck, and was shouting his orders with a vehemence which disclosed his quality. I remained where I was, not knowing what purpose I could serve by going elsewhere. The floor upon which I stood seemed to give way beneath my feet. Before I could recover my posture a great shock passed through the Covenant's frame, as if her anchor chains were being torn from their roots, and I was thrown to the ground. The shock passed, and an easy gliding movement followed, which grew swifter every moment, and ended in a great leaping and bounding. The Covenant was under weigh, and I was embarked upon a new career.

When I had regained my balance, and was asking myself what had occurred, the door of the cabin burst open, and it was Hugh Cornish who came into the light of the lamp, with his two old companions, Christopher Lea, and Richard Thorpe, emerging from the darkness at his heels. The little room overflowed with their forms, and resounded with their heartiness. It was sweet to hear.

"We give you good welcome," cried Cornish, rubbing his fierce moustaches against the grain, and extending his hand to me for the first time in his life.

"It was our misfortune to be ashore when you came on board," said Richard, "but we get a large account of your seamanship."

"A ketch is not a horse," Christopher Lea observed, in his manner of saying less than he knew.

"We hear that you are to join in the adventures of the Covenant," my old troopers protested with glee.

"That is as it may be," I replied to their evident wish, "and I could desire no trustier comrades, if you are as good in a ship as you are in the saddle." I made bold to enquire if I were within my rights in offering them of Captain Pratt's liquor which stood upon the board.

"It does correct the insipidity of water," Hugh Cornish admitted.

"I exercise a toleration towards all good creatures," Christopher Lea assented.

"This humble liquor does make the fear of perdition less lively," said Thorpe with satisfaction, and they lapped up a fair portion. When they had quenched their evident thirst, I protested against detaining them further from their duties.

"My faculty is with the munitions, and not with the sails and running gear," said Cornish proudly, as he bade his companions return to their places.

The Covenant was running free. I found a seat against the side from which I could not easily be dislodged, and Cornish balanced himself upon a stool, as easily as if it were a running horse.

"I get but an ill account of you from your friend Knyvet near the Corne Hill," said I lightly.

"When a man becomes thrifty, he can afford to speak ill of his friends."

"But he was kind to me."

"You were once kind to him when you handed him over to my care at the *Green Man*. He stood in sore need of kindness," said Cornish with a significant gesture.

"But he has amply repaid it in the care, and counsel, which he gave."

"He also served himself well in notifying Captain Pratt of your situation, when you appeared before the court."

"How could he know of such a happening?" I cried with wonder, at the elaboration of the plot.

"It is his business to know, and to tell; and I also hear that you defended yourself like a lawyer."

"My defence was of little value, had not a humane and grateful man gone bonds for me."

"What was his name?" Cornish asked with some show of interest.

"Gilbert Sherwyn," I replied with a sudden pain at my heart.

"Is this the same whom you rescued that night,

when I came within a little of hanging my old comrade at the Green Man?"

"The very same, and all these years he carried the remembrance of that slight office."

"The merchant with the maiden?" he asked again.

"Yes," I assented.

"Then my business is over," he said with sudden cheerfulness. "You may yourself answer Captain Pratt's inquisitive questions."

"But why should Captain Pratt show such kind solicitude for me?"

"I told him things which aroused an incredible interest in you," said Cornish, swelling himself with a pride which he thought pardonable.

"It must have interested him mightily to have had tidings of the great design in which you and I had part," I remarked with the warmth of a comrade.

"Captain Pratt has a whimsical humour," said my old trooper with a reminiscent smile; "and I think he took most interest in the account which I gave him of the 'Great Hanging,' and the doings at the Green Man."

"Did you tell him of the merchant and the maiden?"

"At first I did not. I knew little, but even that would only have increased his passion. I suspected that the pair came out of Spain. To Captain Pratt the most innocent merchant in the world is a captive escaped from a Spanish dungeon, and under that delusion he will search the sea in a mad adventure of enquiry."

"That arises," said I, "from a remembrance of the evil which his own father endured."

"There is some talk of this in the ship," Cornish admitted.

"But this does not explain his interest in me."

"His curiosity about you is the fault of my clumsy tongue," the old soldier confessed. "I have no skill in lying. Since we came into these waters, he has wiled away the time by compelling me to repeat all which I knew of the great days of our warring; and, betrayed by his eagerness, I told of the merchant and the maiden, and let fall my suspicion that they had come out of Spain."

"Had he nothing better than your suspicion?"

"He searched me closely. He enquired of the year, and the month, and the week, in which the rescue of the child occurred, and I was able to satisfy him. He asked me of her age and her stature, of her form, her hair, her eyes; but I could tell him little."

"Is this why he conspired with Fess Knyvet, and offered a heavy reward for my safe delivery?"

"That is the reason as I judge, and if you have any information touching this merchant and the child, I believe it will minister to his curiosity."

"I have told you that I saw the merchant not three days since, the merchant who was kind to me—and Beatrix also, who was more than kind. But they are both dead." The bitterness of the thing choked my speech. Hugh Cornish burst out in the Dutch language an oath of sympathy. Tears filled my eyes, but I was not ashamed in presence of this tried soldier. The Covenant was gliding along with an easy motion, and presently we heard the rattle of the chains, and the splash of anchors.

"Now begins my labour again," said Comish as he arose wearily. "I trust that you will accompany us upon our next adventure. Far be it from me to criticise the old man, but there is need of moderation. The violence which was shown to the king's officers might have bred us trouble. As it is, they gave us a shot from the castle, and obliged us to break out our anchors, and take to the open sea. Now that we are under the shelter of the island, we are safe till the morning light at least."

Hugh Cornish took his way to the deck, and as the *Covenant* was now at her moorings, Captain Pratt was at leisure to seek my company. He came into the cabin with the salt water glistening in his hair, and running down the furrows of his face. He cast aside his dripping canvas coat and oiled cloth cap, and wearily reached for the bottle.

"I was too hasty," he said. "My infirmity grows upon me, but I could not endure the sight of spies upon my deck of sweet pine wood. I fear trouble before I come clear of the land."

"Your action seemed entirely commendable to me," I protested earnestly, "seeing that my name had the merit of being inscribed upon their warrant."

"You must have played a pretty part in the recent disturbances to obtain the distinction of mention in a general warrant of search."

"I did what I could to deserve their wrath," said I modestly.

"My information comes from Hugh Cornish and his mates. Their accounts stimulate my curiosity, rather than satisfy my understanding. But mostly do they entertain me with the account of how you rid the roads of highwaymen."

"That was an enterprise of some ingenuity," I admitted with a show of modesty which I did not feel.

"I had some hesitation in admitting you into our company," Captain Pratt said drily, "in view of the disclosures which Hugh Cornish makes of your lightness of conduct — arraying yourself as a swaggerer, riding in a grand coach, and flying over-seas with treasure which was not your own."

I made as if to pass over the business, for a sudden vision, not of the nameless child, but of Beatrix the woman, arose before my eyes.

"What of the little maiden of whom Hugh Cornish speaks?" Captain Pratt asked with a strange persistency.

"Did he not tell you all?"

"He told me only so much as he knew, but not her name, hor the name of her guardian, nor where he found her, nor where they went."

"You betray an incredible interest in this merchant and the child," I said, shrinking from the pain of harrowing my feelings anew.

"Not incredible," be protested, "if you knew all."

"Who then was she?" I asked, expecting the poor pleasure of knowing the actual name of her to whom I was pledged.

"I believe that this was the daughter of an admiral of the fleet, a man who was close to the great heart of Cromwell."

"I should know the name," I said, as I hurried over the list of those high sailors. "No," he protested again. "His brevet was registered privately in the Court of Admirals. The service upon which he went was one of secrecy and danger, and he sailed without his rank." Captain Pratt took his shaggy head between his hands.

"The loss of this child lies at my door," he muttered in his beard. "I was led away from the path of duty by hatred of my father's foes."

"Let be," said I. "Let be. Heed no more your duty to your admiral neglected. Your quest is at an end."

"Tell me all," he cried, and leaped to his feet. "Where is she now; and where shall I find her?"

"I saw her not three days since. I loved her. She is dead, and lies in Michell's churchyard." I lowered my face upon my arms, overcome by a new accession of emotion. Captain Pratt heaved forward upon the table. I felt a feeble, wavering blind hand upon my shoulder. I could not see his face as he turned and stumbled to the door; but I heard him gasping and mumbling: "Dead; she is dead."

I was too absorbed in my own passion of love to heed his fantasy of revenge, his remorse for a neglected duty, or the mischance which it caused to his admiral's child. These seemed but trifling emotions in face of the glory of my sorrow. I heard him pacing the deck with heavy foot far into the night, and I cast myself down where I was, and slept.

CHAPTER XII

THE sun was streaming through the round windows when I arose. I dressed myself like a seaman in the garments which Captain Pratt had provided, and came on deck. The sea was smooth and the air warm. The Covenant lay in the shelter of the island upon a level keel. But in the night, since last I saw her, she had been transformed from a peaceful trader to a ship of war, and the work was yet going on. I studied what I saw. The Covenant was a stout ship, the sides high, and the breadth less than usual, which gave an appearance of strength and activity, and more care appeared to be spent upon the gear than upon the accommodation for cargo. But most it was refreshing to see men at work.

Captain Pratt was near the helm. All trace of his passion had disappeared, but he did not look as if he desired speech. He was now the master of a ship of war. As he passed upon his duties I saluted him respectfully, but he made a scant reply.

Hugh Cornish was next man in the ship, and he was busy with the gunners. The ordnance had been placed in the night: twenty-two pieces, as I counted, of brass and iron guns, drakes, monkeys, and minions, without flaw or blemish, so far as I could see. The gunners were engaged upon the britching and tackling of the

artillery, fitting shot, and filling cartridges, laying out ladles and sponges, cleaning the arms, shifting and drying the powder in the warm sun.

Christopher Lea was the boatswain, and he with his men were cleaning the ship; coating the masts, yards, and tackling; setting the shrouds and stays; fitting the boats with oars, thwarts, and tholes, stopping and securing the anchors. Also he had two raw lads who followed him about, saying the compass and the ropes, and naming the articles which he pointed out, as he worked. By hearing him, I learned much of martinets, blayles, and gaskets, and could interest myself in what was being done.

Richard Thorpe was with the carpenter, viewing the decks, cabins, and pumps. Nor was the steward idle; for, when a bell sounded six times, he brought up a dish of rum, and large platters of victuals, which he placed upon the deck, and all the crew together shifted their employment.

The thing which I noted well was the discipline of the ship. Every officer was an absolute commander, yet ready in obedience to sacrifice his will to his superior, which caused unity, and unity, I know, leads to a happy issue of all labour. When the meal was at an end Captain Pratt was more cordial, and charged Hugh Cornish to conduct me to all parts of the *Covenant*, and explain what was new to my inexperience.

"No wonder," said I, as we marched up the deck in full sight of the armament, "that Prince Rupert was reduced to moderation by the coming of the *Covenant*. Is this the very ship which affrighted us, when first we sailed to take service for our country?"

"This is the second Covenant. She was erected in the Sheepscote River."

"What became of the former one?"

"You had better ask Captain Pratt," Cornish answered shortly. "He ill brooks being questioned; but I suspect, if you knew her fate, that you would have some insight into his passion against the Spaniard." The old trooper led me down a ladder to the deck below, and from there conducted me to the narrow bowels of the ship.

"There is no great space for cargo," I observed.

"Yet she carries well what is needful for our safety and comfort." My guide made a light in his lantern, and by the feeble rays I could see that the hold was filled with spare spars, and sails, heavy ordnance for mounting, great store of chain, shot, and cartridges, besides smith's tools and all the implements for shipbuilding.

"There is armament enough here for a ship of the line, or a regiment of soldiers," I said in wonder.

"Often we come amongst obstinate men who must be reduced to obedience; and we require to be our own shipwrights where friends are few."

When we came up from the depths of the hold, the Covenant, under head and lower sails, was straining at her anchor. The wind was fair, and rising. The pilot was at the helm, and the anchor was raised. Captain Pratt cried out his orders. Sail after sail was dropped and spread, until the Covenant began to bow and leap, like a great lady, in a mad dance with the waves.

The wind was abaft the beam, as the ship's boy observed to his fellow, until we rounded the point of

the island. The ship's head was then put well in the wind; and, to my surprise, her speed was not abated. A ship which sailed in opposition to the wind was a new thing to me, and I was prompt to enquire the cause.

"That is a device which I learned from Mr. Fletcher of Rye," said Captain Pratt, "and I have so improved it that, for the first time in the history of navigation, I have constructed a ship which will sail to windward with the sails trimmed fore and aft. If it were not for this experiment, the *Covenant* would long ago have found her grave in the ooze of the Western Seas."

From this Captain Pratt launched out upon a wide relation of the building of ships. He explained to me every part of the Covenant, and told me many things which I did not understand, and much which I did not remember. Yet something remained, and I applied myself so diligently to knowledge that, before the day was out, I began to vaunt myself that I was in the way of becoming a seaman. I learned the offices of the sails. the utility of the ropes, and the governance of the helm. With great gravity I made it my business to observe the lessening, or augmenting, of the wind, and the way, and steerage of the ship. In all this Captain Pratt praised me, and promised, when I was less raw, that he would instruct me in taking the height of the sun. Not wishing me to be too great a debtor in knowledge, he asked me of the things which I knew, of the respective merits of long and short pieces.

"I dare avouch out of my own experience," said I, "that long pieces are to be preferred. They burn their powder better; they carry the shot farther, and are of better execution, whilst the shorter pieces spend much

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of their powder without burning and thereby work a slender effect." To this Captain Pratt made a sensible reply, and I thought it concerned much of the success which our arms had acquired upon the sea.

"For the land service, forts, or castles," said he, "the long pieces may be preferred. For shipping the shorter are more serviceable, unless it be in the stern for flight, or in the bow for chase. The reasons are many: easier charging; ease of the ship's side; better traversing and mounting; greater security for the guns themselves, for the longer the piece is, the greater the retention of fire, and so the torment and danger to the piece is greater. Besides, to reach far in fights at sea is of little effect. He who would annoy his enemy must not shoot at random. How much the nearer, so much the better. Otherwise neither short nor long is of any advantage."

"My faculty is upon the land alone," said I; "the practice at sea must depend upon knowledge and experience."

"That," cried Captain Pratt, "is the source of all the disasters which befall us in these days, giving armaments to men who are not bred up in the business of the sea. In this respect we are no better than the Spaniards who look upon a ship as a castle. They fill their tops with stones, and their wales with sherebolts. They load their ordnance with double charges, thinking to reach far, and in their sakers and minions put shot which are fitter for a demi-culverin. Two calever shot in a musket are more effective than these — so the range is close."

In the morning we came into the sound before

Plymouth, and there found at anchor the four ships which we were to convoy to New England. Captain Pratt immediately summoned a conference of masters by hoisting a flag, even before we had come to an anchor. The little vessels were crowded with passengers, like bees when they have swarmed; and as we came to a mooring in their midst, I could hear them setting the watch to the tune of a psalm. Captain Pratt stood with me at the rail, and the spectacle impressed us both — so many useful persons going over-seas.

"This is the first which I have seen of the great New England emigration," I said with my gaze wandering from group to group.

"You deceive yourself. This is not an emigration. It is a revolt."

"It seems but a peaceable rebellion."

"It is none the less sincere. Wait till these peaceable men are entrenched behind the rocks of New England. They will be worse to draw to obedience than foxes from their holes."

"I am convinced that the leaders are in ignorance of any such design," I protested with assurance.

"They are blind leaders of the blind. The lion's whelp which goes out into the wilderness has cast off all thought of obedience. He may perish alone, or he may one day engage in a death grapple with his dam."

In obedience to the signal from the *Covenant*, boats came off from the vessels. There were more ministers than captains, and the gathering at the ship's side was more like a General Assembly than a council of consorts. The companion-way was lowered, and Captain Pratt bade the masters into his ship. So they came on board,

and one called out the name of each as he came over the side: Captain Richard Hillis, of the Charity, 250 tons, and twenty seamen; Captain Adam Houghton, of the Swan, 150 tons; Captain John Thurston, of the Rose, 100 tons, and Captain Henry Beacher, of the Trial, with his owner, Joshua Henshaw. Then followed a crowd of ministers, headed by one who was presented as Increase Mayhew. They flowed over the Covenant's deck, but most they examined the artillery, and conversed with the seamen upon serious matters.

"With all this armament you look more like a searobber, than a ship which is engaged in serious business," said Mr. Mayhew to Captain Pratt.

"These are good creatures," he replied with more gentleness than I had expected, "and each fulfils a wise purpose."

"You seem but young yet to have acquired familiarity with these tools of violence," Mr. Mayhew said, turning to me, where I was seated across a breech caressing the metal with my hand.

"I have been a man of war from my youth up, and I know their utility."

Hugh Cornish was everywhere; and, I thought, experienced some difficulty in keeping his speech within bounds. A bell sounded, and all trooped into the great cabin. Captain Pratt was already seated at the head of the table, and on either hand were the ship-masters. There were yet two places vacant, and Mr. Henshaw as being owner of the *Trial* was bidden to the table.

"There is also here a miracle of a youth," Captain Pratt called aloud, "who has seen much service, and he is minded to adventure something with us. He is strongly commended to me." Several gave me respect, as I entered, and took my place.

"I advise to frame articles of consortship and so proceed," said Captain Pratt, as he opened the conference, and laid his hand to the pen.

"We must wait upon the Lord," Mr. Mayhew broke in, as if the proceedings were in his hands.

"Only so long as the wind holds in the West," Captain Pratt replied sweetly. "Let it but come to the North, or at the most to the Northwest, and the Covenant is under weigh."

"But what of the Swift-sure, and the Mary, which are now detained at Hampton?" cried Mr. Henshaw. "I am part owner in them."

"Ay," broke in one of the ministers who stood behind me. "What detains them? Is it not lack of zeal, and love for the flesh-pots, and the garlic, and the onions?"

"I have no skill in these grasses," said Captain Pratt, his temper rising. "But this I know: I have given you all the time at my command, and I have business to do before the ice forms on the rivers, so every moment is precious."

The ship-masters agreed and articles were drawn up; the *Covenant* to be Admiral; the *Charity*, Vice-Admiral; the *Swan*, Rear-Admiral; the *Rose* and the *Trial*, Captains.

"Now," cried the admiral, with relief, "the vice-admiral, the rear-admiral, and the captains will take counsel with me as to the disposition of the crew; but we are willing to have advice upon the housing of the passengers, and upon that alone."

"I propose," Mr. Henshaw broke in, "that two ministers out of each of the four ships, eight in all, be assigned to the *Covenant*, to give advice if needful, and preserve good order; also, that the admiral give entertainment to such of the women as are of the principal sort." Captain Pratt looked as if he would have fallen down dead. His speech left him, yet he preserved an appearance of meekness.

"We shall compromise by receiving into the Covenant one minister out of all four ships jointly," at length he made shift to utter, "and Mr. Mayhew shall be that one. As for the women I can offer them no entertainment. Their very garments proclaim their unfitness for such surroundings as these," and he waved his hand in the direction of the pikes and cutlasses, which adorned the mainmast in the centre of the cabin.

Secretly I rejoiced that we were to have none of the female kind on the voyage, for I could not bring myself to regard without a pang the blue veins beneath the white skin. In the end Captain Pratt agreed to receive twenty-four landsmen into the *Covenant*. The shipmasters, and ministers, and Mr. Henshaw departed after they had taken some refreshment, but not before Increase Mayhew had spoken briefly to the text: "O, Vine of Sibmah, thy plants are gone over the sea."

As our visitors went over the side Hugh Cornish gave them five guns out of the steerage by way of farewell.

CHAPTER XIII

When Increase Mayhew and the landsmen came on board, Captain Pratt adjured his crew to treat them with civility; to answer "Yes" or "No," if anyone should speak to them; and to say, "I do not know," if they were asked a question. The wind was now at North with fair weather. The Covenant was chafing at her cables, as if scenting purer seas, and ready to shake herself free from the anchor which held her to the earth, like one bound by the iniquity of carnal lusts, as Mr. Mayhew was careful to observe to me.

So we weighed, and having come before the town, the castle put forth a flag which we saluted, and they answered in return. We laid a course to clear the Lizard, the *Covenant* leading, the *Charity* next, the *Swan*, *Rose*, and *Trial*, following as well as they could. Having some leisure I called over the landsmen, and tried them at the muskets. Such as were good at loading, and firing, I enrolled to serve, if occasion should require. Also I must say that many of them were young gentlemen, and behaved themselves well, and were conformable to all reasonable orders, not falling at odds, nor fighting, nor using contemptuous speech to each other.

Soon I had reason to remember how I had vaunted myself to Mr. Mayhew that I was a great sailor, and

could go anywhere; for now I had an unspeakable crudity of the stomach, which prevented me from observing many things which might have been instructive. The sea seemed but a dull senseless thing, long hills of water sliding here and there, and the *Covenant* rising and falling, with a useless motion, instead of proceeding forward with a large froth at her bows.

We were not yet clear of the land when the wind fell, and we had much to do to stem the tide. Captain Pratt tacked about, and putting the fore sheets aback the stays, we waited for the rest of the fleet. But at night the wind came in again from the North, so we put a light in the poop, and by daylight were come to the Lizard. There was now a merry gale, so we were forced to spare the mainsail, to allow the consorts to come up.

A week passed and we were well at sea, but the days were much alike. I recorded my observations in a little book, but they were meagre, as will be seen from the page which I set forth:

September 4th: Foggy skies and boisterous seas, which, Captain Pratt tells me, are prevalent in these regions, in the bad season of the year, which this is.

September 5th: Passed this day in the company of Captain Pratt, telling and hearing marvellous things.

September 6th: Moderate weather with warmth. Basked in the sun all day.

September 7th: A rising wind with rain. Struggled in a storm all this day; and the next.

When we had run a good course, and I had gained some familiarity with the new elements, all slothfulness suddenly left me; for it appeared that there was work to be done. At the breaking of the day a cloud of sails was reported between the sky and the sea. By the morning light each one for himself could see a small vessel tearing down before the wind; and, still further to windward, scarcely above the orb of the earth, five sail more.

"These are Dunkirkers," said Captain Pratt in my ear, as he raised himself from his knee, and removed his perspective glass from the rail, where he had been examining the strangers curiously.

"What are they doing in these waters?" I asked with interest.

"They are in pursuit of the little bark. She sails well, and is coming under our lee for company."

"Will they not hold off, when they see that the bark has found support?"

"A fleet of traders does not frighten these Dunkirkers. They are full of mad confident fellows, and the greater the fleet the greater the prize. I must speak with Hugh Cornish."

But Hugh Cornish was already at work, and he and his men had an infinity of business, clearing the gun deck, taking down the hammocks, heaving out the long boats, putting up the waist cloths, priming the ordnance, hoisting up the powder chests, and making the fireworks ready. Captain Pratt put out his signal, and the consorts huddled close to the Covenant. He made order that the four ships, the Charity, the Swan, the Rose, and the Trial, should receive the landsmen out of the Covenant, and give in exchange such of their crew as were willing to adventure their lives to the uttermost.

Whilst the transfer was being effected the ships lay so close I could see and hear all which was being done. In the Charity, Mr. Thornton was speaking to the text: "We will go into a land where we shall see no war. nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread, and there will we dwell." In the Rose, Mr. Dwight was at prayer, in which he had a singular good gift: "Augment in us," he was saying, "hope and trust, and seeing that we live in these perilous times let Thy Fatherly Providence defend us from the violence of our enemies." In the Trial, and the Swan, so many of the company as could be spared were at their devotions upon the upper deck, and it was something to see how cheerful, and comfortable, they were. Not a woman or child showed fear, though we did justly apprehend the danger to be great, for the enemy had five ships, and the smallest was reputed to carry at least twenty brass pieces.

In the midst of the confusion Mr. Mayhew came to Captain Pratt and proposed a conference of ministers, to take counsel concerning the fight which was to ensue.

"I should be sorry," he took time to reply, "if any were denied the opportunity for easing his mind of any weighty thing which may be in it — but listen!"

From the Swan we heard the voice of the minister: "We have been recovered from the brink of the pit, and will not be thrust back. Thus far we have been kept safe, and will be to the end, if only we quit us like men." And from the Rose: "This contest has been thrust upon us, yet victory shall be ours over these violent men, and over the Beast, his picture, his mark, and the number of his name."

"You observe," said Captain Pratt, "that the ministers are speaking their minds in prayer."

"But," said Mr. Mayhew, "we are not well placed for hearing."

"I do not apprehend that they are speaking to us," Captain Pratt replied.

"Our trust is in the Lord of Hosts alone," Mr. Mayhew declared devoutly.

"But we shall not neglect thereby to take such measures for our safety as are prescribed by art and experience," Captain Pratt assured him.

When all was arranged, — the landsmen transferred to their own ships, the crew of the *Covenant* enriched by adventurous sailors, and every man written down for his quarter, — Captain Pratt ordered the four vessels to keep together till they were signalled.

"For," said he, "we shall make an experiment with the *Covenant* alone: and certainly, whatever be the issue, we shall have gained exercise and taught those marauders to keep faith with me."

It was now about the middle of the afternoon, the wind at the North with fair weather. The fleet of Dunkirkers was about a league to the eastward, the fleeing bark not a cannon-shot astern of us, and sailing well. She had overhauled us, whilst we were engaged as before mentioned. Captain Pratt, desiring to see the issue before the night fell, changed his front and stood to meet the Dunkirkers. He was upon the poop. The pilot was at the wheel. Hugh Cornish with his men lay along the sides, and I was standing by, to execute any order which might be entrusted to me. As we came into the wind again, the hunted ship went tum-

bling past not two cable-lengths to leeward. Captain Pratt seized his speaking-trumpet, and cried in a voice which made me quake against the time it should speak in anger:

"What ship is that?"

"The Bounty from Bristol," in a thin voice came struggling up against the wind.

"Where bound?"

"The Virginias."

Now here is a mystery which I have to relate. It is true that my spirit was inflamed by the passion for battle, and my mind was filled with thoughts of the contention which was about to ensue. Our consorts lay huddled together at the stern, and were sending up from their decks a solemn psalmody. The fleeing Bounty was going by to the southward with a freight of fugitives, and the Dunkirkers were upon us mad for plunder. Over all was the low sky which shut us out from the world. Yet it was the full afternoon, and from my post on the Covenant's deck I could see every movement upon the stranger's deck: the captain at the helm, the sailors at the ropes, and a huddle of women behind the low bulwarks. I could almost distinguish the features of the women, though they were all dressed alike in grey cloaks with a hood which partially obscured the face.

They looked miserable enough, and who could tell that they were not, like myself, leaving behind in England all which they held dear, even were it but a grave in the churchyard of their parish. My heart was strangely moved, and a full flow of sympathy went out from me. Captain Pratt's perspective glass lay on the poop, and

I raised it to my eye to get a nearer view of the grey cluster of women. The Covenant's deck was leaping with her gathering speed, and increasing the distance between us and the Bounty. I had no great skill with the glass, and one instant the ship's hull lifted itself slowly into the field of vision, and again gave place to a patch of sail. As the view dissolved, I caught one glimpse of the grey-clad passengers, and then the strange thing occurred. Between the sky and the sea, I saw the face of Beatrix Sherwyn. I still profess that I did see it. I am willing at this day to swear with uplifted hand, or by God and His book, that I did see her face. All sense of place and time passed from me. The glass fell to the deck with a crash. Captain Pratt was startled into an exclamation, and seized me from behind by the neck-cloth, else I would have gone over the side.

The impression, that in very truth I had seen Beatrix, was so strong upon me that I made a dive for the wheel to bring the *Covenant* about in pursuit; but Captain Pratt's strong hand was upon me, and his grave eyes enquired of mine what this seizure should mean. He was compelled to leave me, for the Dunkirkers were coming down with the wind, and with the strong scent of battle my senses quickly returned.

Captain Pratt steered for the centre of the enemy's line, and as he entered, the two Dunkirkers upon either hand let go their guns; but, as they were ill served, we came off unscathed. We held our course; and, as we gained position, Hugh Cornish loosed both batteries with such a discharge that, I thought, the Covenant herself must have been blown out of the water. The

Dunkirkers' spars came tumbling about their ears, and we passed through their line, firing a second time as we cleared. As we were making a circle to fetch them on the flank, and being well clear of the smoke and combustion, colours broke out from their tops. Captain Pratt hoisted his flags, and one of the Dunkirkers lay to, till the *Covenant* came up to his windward, grinning at him with half her guns.

"This will teach them to keep out of my waters," he said with ferocity in his face.

"This is an error," a voice protested from the enemy's deck, which was now within hailing distance.

"Is this your way of keeping the agreement?" Captain Pratt called back, "under which I undertook to refrain from the English Channel? I am upon a journey, and I warn you once more that, if any ship for New England is mishandled, or alarmed, I shall come, when I have good leisure, and burn you at your anchorage behind the Mole of Brugère."

The Dunkirkers, when they learned their mistake, stood to the southward, and as we went to join our consorts, I could hear their laughter and blasphemous jests. I had a thought that the *Bounty* might have stood by to see the issue of the contest in which we were engaged on her behalf, but it fell out otherwise. She had stood to her course, and now her hull was fast disappearing below the orb of the earth.

All my thought was of pursuit, to resolve the doubt which oppressed me. Why should I have doubts? I had seen the face of Beatrix. Was it then but a vision, since I doubted what I had actually seen? I debated long within myself. I called up every detail of that

night in Gilbert Sherwyn's house: the wild appeal of the maiden; the despairing cry of her guardian, who confessed that he had accomplished his mad design upon her life; the horrible disaster of fire from which I barely escaped; the bills of mortality; the mournful procession which I witnessed from Fess Knyvet's window; the two graves in the churchyard from which I had gathered sweet flowers, and the Presence which visited me there as I kept my lonely vigil.

The thing was too great for me. I had not seen Beatrix, and I should never see her more. I fell into a melancholy. Captain Pratt regarded me curiously. Why should I reveal to him that I was subject to spectres of the imagination? On two or three occasions he adverted to the matter of the Bounty, but I professed no interest. My heart was swollen with a recrudescence of grief, and it caused me shame that a man could not keep it in bounds, lest it might imperil his intellect. Yet there was talk in the Covenant, and I could not fail to hear that the adventurers to Virginia were known to be of the sect which is called Quakers.

"What are Quakers?" I enquired of Captain Pratt, one day when he had good leisure.

"I am not expert in their doctrines," he answered shortly.

"But why are they bound for the Virginias instead of to New England?"

"For a good reason. There is a law in Massachusetts, as I know to my cost, that masters of ships will be fined a hundred pounds, if they bring a Quaker within the colony, and that the Quaker, man or woman, shall be sent to the house of correction and whipped."

"This passes my comprehension," said I.
"Yet the fact is there," said Captain Pratt.

The remaining part of the voyage to New England was but a dull affair. Every ship, save the *Covenant*, was a seminary, and the ministers had preaching, and exposition, to their heart's content. Even Mr. Mayhew who was with us would not be denied the exercise of his function, and he did something to relieve the tedium of the days, which were filled with fine showers of rain, or thick fog, and occasionally a blink of sunshine.

We were not allowed to escape without some show of trouble. After a boisterous day, and a stormy night, we encountered a tempest of foul, intemperate, weather. The passengers were put below the hatches, and kept a fast all that day and the next, whether they would or not. The sails were taken off, save the main course and the mizzen; but the wind increasing, and the sea grown high, we lay with the helin aweather, and made no way save as the ship drove. This too had an end, and the wind falling to a small gale, we had fair weather, and with a merry breeze and sunshine we held our course ever to the westward.

At length a land-bird perched in the rigging, and we judged that we must be nearing the New World. Captain Pratt made an observation with his cross-staff, and reported that it was so. We sounded, and discovered the earth at eighty fathoms, and there the fleet took great store of codfish, which were very seasonable. Next day we had a sight of the land, and towards evening there was a sweet smell in the air like the smell of a garden. The consorts proceeded on their way to Boston; but the *Covenant* held a course which brought

us inside Baker's Island, which is over against Nahumkek, since called Salem, where Captain Pratt said there was a sweet creek with a sandy bottom. The chains went clattering merrily through the holes, and the anchors at last grappled us to the New World.

CHAPTER XIV

In the morning after our arrival I was early astir to have a sight of the new world into which I was come, and I cannot say that it looked like the earthly paradise which I had imagined it to be. In the distance was a line of hills which looked hard and purple in the early light. and the forest came almost to the water's edge, save where it broke into a clearing to give place to a cluster of houses. As the sun arose, and people began to stir, Hugh Cornish touched off a gun to signify our arrival. Before the echoes died away amongst the rocky headlands, there was a puff of smoke on a hill above the town, and the growl of a small cannon came back in Every house poured out its inhabitants, and reply. they hurried to the beach to learn what this shooting off of guns might imply. Evidently the Covenant was no stranger in those waters, for I saw preparations were being made to send on board, as a tall, gaunt man was descending into a small boat which was moored to a rock.

"This is Governor Northcott," Captain Pratt informed me. As he was being pulled across the narrow space of water to where we lay, I had leisure to observe him closely. He was above the middle age, with a stern, and resolute, countenance which was made more rugged, and severe, by the grizzled beard which covered the upper part of his doublet.

"He has the air of a man who is austere, yet passion-

ate," said I, as this sturdy pioneer prepared to mount the side.

"A man hard to manage," rejoined Captain Pratt, "domineering, conscientious, and deficient in sense."

"You are welcome back to our town of peace," Governor Northcott said by way of salutation, as his furrowed visage appeared above the bulwarks, and his glance caught the *Covenant's* armament.

"I am a man of peace," Captain Pratt replied, "and for a town of peace I thought your gun on the hill gave a prompt reply to my signal."

"We can handle our weapons — flint-locks for the savages, if need be, and something heavier for any who would make an enterprise against our liberty." The Governor glared at me as if I were an officer of the king, and I returned the steadfastness of his gaze.

"But where are your passengers, and what young man is this?" he demanded, as if it were his right to know.

"My passengers have proceeded to Boston, in their own ships, and this is Captain Nicholas Dexter," he responded to the blunt enquiry.

"Captain of what?" cried the Governor, neglecting to reply to my civil salutation.

"Captain of Troop Sixty-Seven, Army of the Parliament, formerly commanded by one called Cromwell," said I, with some dignity in my bearing. Governor Northcott removed his hat, and made me a profound obeisance.

"Does he elect to remain with us?" the Governor enquired with some eagerness.

"That is as it may be," said Captain Pratt. "My own desire is that he should sail with me."

"And whence do you come, and where do you next proceed?" the Governor asked with persistence, and his air of authority about him.

"That also is as it may be. It is not my custom to be catechised," said Captain Pratt with irritation in his voice.

"I admit your right to reticence. You are beyond my jurisdiction. My question was directed towards information upon which I might frame a judgement of this young man." The Governor was not abashed by the shortness of the answer which he had received; and, being alarmed lest some heat might develop by a conflict between these two passionate men, I hastened to give some explanation.

"I desire civil life and quietness," said I. "My warring is at an end. Ever since I took counsel with Sir Harry Vane, I had the desire to serve this community, and do something to restore harmony."

"Harry Vane was not eminent for his attainments in harmonious living," cried the Governor, bristling up like a hedge-hog. "There is now no lack of harmony in this community at least. I have attended to that; and, by the blessing of God upon the stocks and the whipping-post, there is in Salem such a correctness of demeanour, and uniformity of doctrine, as you shall not find in New England."

As the sun rose, the sharp rattle of a drum came over the bay, and the watching crowd deserted their posts to begin their daily work. A flag fluttered out from the staff upon the hill, and Captain Pratt's quick eye caught its defect. "What strange banner is this?" he cried.

"For want of a better it is the flag of England, but with my own sword I have slashed from its folds the emblem of Popery."

"Will not this desecration of the emblem be construed as treason?" I enquired with a show of mildness, and an effort to conceal my feeling of horror at this act which appeared to me to savour of sacrilege.

"Treason or no treason, it is a warning that neither Pope nor Tyrant has any part in these plantations. This exodus to the New World, I would have you know, is rebellion against the king, as sincere, if not so open, as your rebellion against the king's father. This land is our own land. We have purchased it with our goods, or won it with our weapons. We have cleared it with our hands. We have watered it with our sweat, and our blood. We have hallowed it with our prayers. What have we to do with prelate or king? As little with England as with Rome."

"All this which you say seems very probable," Captain Pratt broke in; "but it is time for me to break my fast."

Governor Northcott became gracious and forgot his wrath. He invited us to come to his house. The Captain had some consultation with Hugh Cornish, and then, with the Governor and myself, he descended the side. We had a boat's crew to row us ashore with some grandeur. On the way we passed two vessels which were laden deep; and lying by were seven boats with all the implements for fishing. As I leaped upon the solid earth, I had the resolve never again to set foot in a craft.

The Governor's house stood behind the hill and our road led across the summit. Upon the way I saw that the little commonwealth was in a thrifty condition. Men were engaged upon the shore in curing fish, and drying the flesh of wild animals which they had slain. Some had carpenter's tools in their hands, and were building a house as if they were bred up to the business: the posts of even height, and firmly placed; the wall-plates in their notches; the roof upon its supports; the rafters well bound by withes of oak; the eave boards in their crooks, and the sides of the fabric covered in with clap-boards of cedar.

As we approached, the workmen dropped their tools, and crowded about us to hear what we had to tell, of the voyage outward, and of the posture of public affairs in England. When we neared the top of the hill, I could see broad fields extending to the edge of the forest, and men at work therein, gathering peas, and beans, or delving for potatoes. Corn of an amazing height was waving in the wind, and the hillsides were decked with patches of yellow, a monstrous fruit which shone like gold in the sunlight of the autumn morning.

Upon the hill-top a great work of fortification was going on. Labourers were grubbing up stumps, and shoving aside the trunks of trees. The spectacle drew me away from the throng which was following up for the sake of hearing the news from home. I engaged in conversation with the man in charge. He had been a soldier and was doing his best; but he was willing to learn, and I was not averse to instructing him in a trade which I had learned in a hard school. I quickly discovered the weakness of his position, and explained

to him the insufficiency of his plan. Governor North-cott followed close, and was an intent listener.

"I perceive," said he, "that you have some faculty for the erection of defences."

"A man is apt to acquire skill, when his life, and the success of his cause, depend upon his labour," I said with authority.

"I observe that my humble efforts do not meet with your approval. I did but follow the law of nature, and built as well as I knew. What better scheme would you recommend?"

"Defences," said I, "must be designed to an end. Before I could give any useful advice, I should know the ultimate purpose which you have in view, and the means at your command."

"My purpose is to erect in Salem a Church of the Purity, to which all may come who are of like mind with myself. To those who differ from me I accord the privilege of going elsewhere. But how does this touch the question of physical defences?"

"If you aim to become self-sufficient, you must prepare to defend yourself, and that is a task for a thousand men. If, however, all the communities upon these coasts were to unite in a common purpose, each would be a support to the other, and the one defence serve for all."

"I fear I must stand by myself," said the Governor stoutly. "We have our trials and our difficulties, from unfaithful men, from open foes, and from enemies who are disguised as friends."

"Then, instead of a well-kneaded people, the New England settlement appears to be a most complicated concern." "That is quite true," he admitted bitterly. "There are sixteen settlements in the Bay, besides the colonies of New Haven, Providence, and those on the Connecticut River, which already are pushing the Dutch of New Netherland to the westward."

"Partners in danger should partake jointly. Fellow-exiles should contrive together. Would it not be possible to unite in one agreement?" I asked with enthusiasm.

"I fear not. The men of Plymouth are naught but mongrel Dutch. The men of Boston are merely a trading church, Providence is a nest of the cockatrice, and New Haven is a dead sea of heresy."

"And yet," I interposed, "a community of interest would develop a community of sentiment. A union for defence would lead to an agreement in principle, and it might be in doctrine."

"I shall never consent to making truth subservient to material things." The Governor's brows contracted with anger.

"Nor I either," I protested; "but the scourge of a common danger is a sovereign remedy for bringing truth in relation with life."

Captain Pratt and his following were well on their way. The men had resumed their work of fortification. Governor Northcott remained with me on the hill-top above Salem, and I drew a lesson from what I saw.

"You have here," I said, "not above three hundred souls, and not more than sixty, I suppose, who are competent to bear arms. To defend this colony standing alone would demand above three hundred trained soldiers. Had I but twoscore of an enemy, this simple parapet and ditch would not provide above an hour's work.

Your trace is too narrow; your escarp and counterscarp too sloping; your glacis is wanting. To provide any defence — if you adopt this plan at all — you should have fraises on the scarp, and abattis on the anterior slope, besides many other things which I could mention. If all the colonies were united for mutual support, a simple stockade in each settlement, with sunk batteries on the headlands, would suffice."

"We shall advise further of this," Governor Northcott said, and he gave me much respect as I completed my demonstration; "and if you are correct in the main doctrines of religion, I believe you might prove to be a useful member of the community."

We took our way down the hill to the Governor's house, which was well placed in a recess of the forest, with fair grounds and walks upon each side. The house appeared commodious, with broad windows, and shutters of cedar. I praised it warmly, for I longed for a civil life and quietness, after the turmoil of the sea, the confusion of a great city, and the hardness of the tented field.

"We have accomplished something," my host admitted, "in the way of decency and order in this place where, not long since, the naked savages rioted by day and by night."

We overtook Captain Pratt at the door, and with some graciousness Governor Northcott invited us within. The house was of the richer sort. There was a glass lantern in the hall, well gilded and painted, and on the staircase was a Turkey carpet. We entered a large room, wherein was a round table, a long form against the wall, and stools covered with good needlework,

as if there were a woman in the house. But the Governor, being an austere man, and I suppose having his women-kind in subjection, we saw none of them at the meal which was already laid out. We sat to our places, where was a most excellent potage of bacon, and milk, and coleworts, mackerel, and gooseberries, all boiled together, besides a venison pasty, and abundance of cider, so we made a good breakfast.

When the meal was concluded, we walked out to view the little community further, and were all very cheerful. The sun was warm, the sky was clear, and the earth gave forth a wholesome smell. Everywhere there were signs of good husbandry, abundance of swine and chickens, the land used for what it was most fit, food in plenty, and every outward sign of peace. The thought in my heart was how willingly I should join with these pioneers, if only Beatrix were by my side. Here could I spend my life in great content.

The next day, being the Sabbath, and the Governor having business to keep him engaged, Captain Pratt and I decided to spend the intervening day in taking further knowledge of the strange world into which we were come. So we obtained a pair of guns, and made our way into an uncouth wilderness of stately timber. There we encountered several barbarous Indians, and passed over much land which was unfit for culture, rocky, barren, and like to keep men miserable. So we spent the day, and saw many strange things, notably a snake as big as a man's wrist, two yards long, with a sharp horn at the end of his tail, which had swallowed a wild chicken, as big as you would give fourpence for in England. Also we gained insight into the nature

of the wasp which dwells in a nest like the crown of a women's hat. It was plated with scales, and I mistook it for a fruit like the pineapple, but I was quickly undeceived. Nor should I omit to mention that, as we returned in the dusk of the evening, we encountered the devil in the image of a foul-smelling cat.

Upon the Sabbath we went to the meeting-house, and partook of the sacrament in an orderly way, save only that a turbulent woman prophesied, and under cover of that cloak applied most injurious terms to the minister, charging that he was under a covenant of works, and would not desist till Mr. Northcott did threaten to call the constable to put her forth. When this confusion was at an end, the deacon put the congregation in mind of their duty towards the poor, so all went down to his seat, and Captain Pratt and I put into the bag such a sum, I believe, as had never been known in that church before. As the woman reiterated the word "covenant," Captain Pratt grew distraught, as if the name of his ship had recalled his enterprise to his mind, and on the way home he opened up the matter which lay next his heart.

"I can endure this thing no longer," he said. "You must decide whether you will accompany me, or remain where you are."

"I would serve the cause of purity," said I earnestly, "and when we come within we shall speak further with Mr. Northcott." Then I explained that the Governor was impressed with my knowledge of military affairs, and it might be that I could obtain useful employment in putting the colonies in a posture of defence, and so unite

them in principles by the common bond of service against danger.

"This is a large matter," said Captain Pratt after a period of silence. "Each town maintains the government of its own affairs, and yields obedience to none. Do you make the experiment, and when I come again, it may be that we can discuss this affair with enlarged experience. These colonies are like a poor maid sitting in the wilderness, beset with all manner of hurtful beasts. I do not love her, but I believe she will bring forth strong men. The Covenant has been a terror to those who would do her evil. We have convoyed many useful persons hither, and I am yet disposed to exercise violence towards those who wish her ill."

That evening several of the more notable inhabitants came to meet us, and we were well entertained, but little occasion was afforded for useful speech. In the morning Captain Pratt was impatient to be off. I could not bring myself to remain behind, though the Governor pressed me, and said that he would instantly appoint those who would enquire into the doctrines which I professed. When I declined, he agreed to give me a letter to Governor Pendleton of Boston, who, he said, had at his disposal five hundred pounds for the erection of fortifications.

We bade farewell to Salem and its Governor, and plunged into the forest, following a path which Captain Pratt knew well. We fetched a wide compass, and as we neared a creek which fell into the Bay, we heard the sound of hammers, and the clanging of anvils. The bellows were roaring, and the furnaces blazed through the trees, as we emerged. There, before us, the Covenant

was hove down. Her batteries were placed at one side, and men were scraping the bottom, caulking the seams, and applying rich paint over all. Hugh Cornish was at his post, as serious as if he were forging thunderbolts. Captain Pratt made a survey of what had been done, and expressed himself well pleased.

A tent was already pitched, and we dwelt together till the task was completed. The work went on by day and by night. Furnaces and bellows were roaring, and the clang of the hammer and anvil never ceased. Chains and cordage were renewed, anchors, bolts, and rings were proved, and every weapon was overhauled. When a good tide served the *Covenant* was launched anew. The stout spars which served so well in the northern waters were replaced by towering masts of pine, and new sails were scrubbed and bent to their places. Into the hold was bestowed a greater quantity of cloths, ropes, spars, and cordage, than had served for the original furnishings; and, finally, the ordnance and ammunition were hoisted on board.

The demeanour of Captain Pratt had changed. All those weeks upon the sea, and in Governor Northcott's house, he was mild of manner and gentle in speech, so that an incredible liking for him arose in my heart. But as the work upon the *Covenant* approached completion, he became harsh and bitter, as I knew him when first I came into his ship. One example will serve. There was near by a wooden college from which more than fifty preachers, and other useful persons had issued, and several of them sought us out, whilst we were engaged as before mentioned, to converse with the men upon spiritual affairs. But Captain Pratt would have none of it.

"I am not inexpert in these doctrines," he said, "and will myself instruct my men in such things as are needful; but I will do it when I have good leisure. For the present I have a sufficiency of care."

His conduct reflected upon myself, and if I were to remain in New England, I desired to start fair. So, as we were under weigh for Boston, where it was intended to take in provisions, I opened up the matter with him.

"You have no call," he said, in reply, "to suffer poverty, and banishment in this poor desert. I entreat you to join with me in the exploits of the *Covenant*, which now is new built from the keel upwards."

"Much as I long for your companionship," I said, "my duty seems to lie here. I think I can do something towards harmony. When you come again, we shall see if I have been deceived."

"I have no great hope," was all the encouragement which I received. "These settlements will grow in their own way."

"But will the devotion of the ministers go for naught?"

"In so far as they are faithful ministers, they will have their reward. But they are given to disputation. A shift of wind and a shower of rain is of more value than all the theories in New England."

We cast anchor in the harbour of Boston. Great store of provision was put on board, but of merchandise not a whit. At Captain Pratt's suggestion I remained close on board till all was completed.

"For," said he, "I am doubtful company for a young man who is about to establish himself in an orderly way. I am useful to these people, but my ways are not their ways. I exercise a freedom of speech, and a liberty of action which is not to their taste." Then he took me by the hand, and I said farewell to Hugh Cornish and my old comrades in arms, and went over the side to be pulled ashore.

CHAPTER XV

I PASSED my first night in Boston with Luke Vardy in his commodious tavern at the end of the North Lane. In the morning I observed from my window that a change had come over the face of the earth. A heavy rain had fallen, with frost coming after. The colour had departed from the woods, and the glory of the season perished in the night. The trees stood bare and leafless, and grey clouds hung upon the hills which but yesterday flamed with the scarlet banners of the autumn.

When I looked over the Bay, the Covenant was gone. A sense of elation possessed me. I was free from the discipline of a soldier's life, from political toils, and from Captain Pratt's dominating personality. My life was my own, and I was free to follow any chimera which attracted me. Not the desire to serve the cause of freedom, and restore harmony to those disordered communities, was the cause of my disinclination to sail with the Covenant, but rather the desire to be alone with my vision of Beatrix, as she appeared between the sky and the sea, behind the bulwarks of the Bounty.

Why did I not reveal this truth to Captain Pratt? Because the secret of my heart had been concealed from myself. But now, alone, the vision assumed a more solid proportion, and into my heart there stole the

belief that I was nearer to her spirit in New England, than in Michell's churchyard, where her body lay.

Why, again, did I not mention to him the spectacle which I had witnessed? If, as he appeared to think, Beatrix were the admiral's daughter whom he sought, we might join in an adventure of search. I feared that this admiral's daughter was now a figment of his mind, that she had long since perished, and that his quest was a pretext, or explanation, to himself of his passion of revenge against the Spaniard. In any case Captain Pratt was not the man to follow a vision which he had not witnessed. But now he was not here to restrain my fancy with his strong sense of what was reasonable, and a man who follows a vision had better proceed alone.

I formed the resolution to pursue the *Bounty* to the Virginias, and undertook to put it in force before I had broken my fast. I left the tavern and walked down to the water's edge. As I looked upon the illimitable waste of water which separated me from my former life, upon the sea which had borne me so far from my trials and sorrow, my mind cleared completely, and I was happy.

Being happy, I desired activity, and the thought of exercise begat the desire for food. I returned to the tavern, and found the host at his leisure. He was a humane man, and fond of talk. Whilst breakfast was preparing he sat with me, and he was aflame to know of my experiences, and present intention.

"It is my purpose," said I, "to proceed to the Virginias, and I would willingly learn if there is any shipping going thence."

"I know of none," said he; "but a craft is presently building which promises to sail within the winter."

"Is the distance too great for a journey afoot?" I asked.

"As great as from the Land's End to John o' Groats, and the way lies through trackless forests, and over rivers as wide as a small sea."

"Then do you apprehend that I must remain where I am?"

"Unless the Covenant should return, and that event is ever uncertain; or a ship might arrive out of England on the outward voyage to the Virginias."

"In that event," said I, "I might adventure something in these parts, if thereby I may gain a peaceable living, and a competency. But I am at a loss to know where to establish myself."

"In that matter," he replied, "you will receive some assistance from the magistrates and elders, who will enquire into the correctness of your doctrines, and your way of life."

"But I have no desire to entangle myself in affairs of politics or religion."

"You will understand that here the church and the state are identical, and that politics and religion are combined."

"But I am free to choose where I shall remain," I said, with some irritation at these restraints.

"In that case," said the tavern-keeper with a merry face, "if you are a Separatist, you will find the purest church in Salem, where they uphold the right of every congregation to regulate its own affairs."

"I have had enough of Salem," said I.

"In Plymouth it is the same," he continued. "If you assent to the right of the magistrates to uphold the orthodoxy of religion, and desire communion with a church in which the ministers have all the authority of a bishop, then I commend you to Boston. If, however, you would not confine citizenship to church members alone, and object to an aristocracy and a permanent magistracy, you will find many persons conformable to your views on the Connecticut River. Last of all, which I suspect is the truth, if you would live in a secular state, where all sorts of persons, Baptists, Gortonists, and Quakers, do practise such forms of religion as are good in their own eyes, then you may betake yourself across the Bay to Providence."

"Is there then no definite government of this wide region in matters civil, and religious?" I asked with wonder too great to be concealed.

"Only in Boston," the man replied, "is there any attempt to define the relation between the magistrates, the ministers, and the people. But even here there have been evil doings, and that most recently."

By some means my arrival had become known to Mr. Mayhew; and, whilst I sat at breakfast with my friendly host, he came into the room. He greeted me warmly, but showed some reluctance when I bade him join us in the manner of friends.

"Have you then decided to establish yourself in Boston?" Mr. Mayhew asked.

"That is my intention, in default of better," said I; "but from the information which I receive, I doubt if I would be a welcome visitor."

"This is a chosen people," Mr. Mayhew began in a

serious voice. "This exodus is a fore-ordained event. Here we shall plant a new church in a virgin world, which will serve as a model to the old. I believe that the coming of the Lord will be amongst the rocks of New England."

"A desirable spectacle, truly," the tavern-keeper broke in. "I am here longer than either of you; and, if this be your view, you are but sojourners in Mesech, strangers in the tents of Kedar!"

"We are here like a precious ore in the melting-pot," Mr. Mayhew reforted; "and who can tell what shall issue hence? I believe it will be a people pure, and strong, loving liberty, and God, worshipping Him in peace, acceptable in His eyes, stiff-necked against Pope and king."

"And against magistrate and ministers," I interposed. "I fear the vice of pride, which was our undoing in England, has gained an entrance here."

"You will find here the heart of man, and the vices which are proper to it," cried the landlord; "and the New England, like the old, a Magor-Missabib, a Kirjath-Sannah, a place of fear and enmity, like all other places of which I have knowledge."

"You employ a seemliness of speech," said Mr. Mayhew, regarding the fellow with approval, and forgetting to contradict him.

"A man who keeps a tavern quickly learns the speech which makes for peaceable living." He looked at me keenly, as if there were a lesson in the saying for myself.

"I am not come to enlarge upon these matters," said Mr. Mayhew, turning to me; "but to warn you that you must instantly seek permission from the magistrates, if you desire to settle profitably in these parts." "That is entirely to my taste," I assured him, "and I shall seek out the Governor at once."

"The Governor is presently upon a mission to the Indians," Mr. Mayhew informed me, "but I shall myself conduct you to the Deputy, Thomas Dudley."

I promised the inn-keeper that I should return, and Mr. Mayhew and I made our way up the little street to the house of the Deputy. We entered without knocking, which appeared to be the custom, and turned from the passage into a low, wide room. Mr. Dudley was seated at a small table, with his face to the light, and his back bowed as if he were engaged on a work of writing. As he heard the sound of our foot-fall upon the bare boards, he thrust his papers into his hat which lay at his hand, and turned to receive us.

"Mr. Mayhew," he said, "you have taken me in the act of furtive scribbling. It is my vice, misspending my earthly time in spoiling good white paper. The quill of a goose will be my undoing."

When he noticed that there was a stranger in the room, he turned his bleak face to me with enquiring eyes which ranged from my head to my feet, and waited until Mr. Mayhew had presented me as Captain Nicholas Dexter.

"Captain, Soldier," he addressed me in a high harsh voice, "are you not aware that the employment of those great boots is prohibited under order of the General Court?"

"These boots found favour in the eyes of my Lord General Cromwell," said I, "and if my appearance is ill-pleasing to you, I shall betake myself from your presence." Mr. Mayhew looked at me in amazement that I should withstand the Deputy to his face.

"I observe that you speak in a polite and scholarlike way," was Mr. Dudley's reply, in a voice which was not so high, but was none the less harsh.

"I am pleased if my speech finds more favour than my appearance. I confess to some knowledge of the humanities," I admitted modestly, and yet with pleasure at his discernment.

"It may be then," said Mr. Dudley, busying himself with his papers, "that you can inform me if the cockatrice lays an egg."

"I observe that you too have some tincture of letters," I said, when I had explained the natural history of that strange bird, as well as I could.

"Truly, I am under the bondage of the letter. The thing I would write that I cannot. I can only write what fits the obstinate rhyme which will not yield to my thought."

"I have heard," said I, "that when the passion is hot, it fuses the most obstinate words to fit the mood."

"I avoid the practice of those vain amatorious writers, vulgar amorists, whose issue is but a category of lies," said Mr. Dudley with severity. "And, if there is a romantical element in my labour, it is the fault of truth; because I have set down things as they are, and have not wittingly dealt in inventions."

"Seeing that you are interested in these high matters, I could procure for you some verses from the hand of Cromwell's Latin secretary, which are accounted good, and might be of assistance to you."

"Are they printed in a book?" he demanded, and I agreed that they were.

"Then I shall have none of them. If printed, they

were sold, and I abhor the attempt at selling writings — inventing lies for gain — as I abhor the heresy of Simon himself, and his devil-sent consort, purchased for money in Tyre."

The Deputy-Governor's heat became so great that his mind was drawn aside, and he overcame the temptation to read the verses which he had written. When Mr. Mayhew mentioned the business upon which we were come, the Deputy admitted that a charge had already been laid, that I might take means to purchase a houseplot, before seeking admission to the church, and he asked me for a sight of my letters.

"I do not possess any," I answered simply.

"Were you not then in communion with any church?" he demanded.

"I was of the very body of the church, which is the union of all men who are determined to make righteousness to prevail, even to the length of losing their lives."

"These are high words, and it may be true; but is there none to vouch that you will maintain the unity of religion in this jurisdiction?"

"I require no man to answer for me, seeing that the word has been in my mouth, and the sword for many years in my hand."

"For myself," said the Deputy, "I may not speak; yet we shall confer, and advise you further; for there is a law by which strangers may not be entertained here for more than fourteen days without permission, and you have already exceeded that limit, in the forest of Newtown."

"But," I remonstrated, "my leaving England was sudden, and I had no time to make large preparation.

However, I am known to Governor Northcott by the word of Captain Pratt."

"There are many," said Mr. Dudley in a dry way, "who doubt the capacity of your friend as an authority in spiritual affairs. I have already advised awaiting Governor Pendleton's return; and, as I hear he is this morning arrived, you had better seek him out at once."

Mr. Mayhew and the Deputy had matters to discuss, so I left them, and made my way alone according as I was directed, to seek an interview with the Governor of Boston. I found him at home, and presented myself as a friend of Sir Harry Vane, and an ally of Captain Pratt. The governor was cordial to a high degree, and he gave me the first generous welcome which I had in the colonies. Here was a man with whom I could labour. His strength and beauty of character showed in his face. In the same moment he won my confidence, and commanded my respect, by his amiable personality, by his grave, modest, and scholarlike demeanour.

"And so," he said, "you would be of the number who desire to put this New England business through to a conclusion. It is a noble work, but it demands a judicial temper, and a conciliatory carriage. The magistrates are obstinate, the ministers are foolish, and the people are stiff-necked."

"That is my immediate design," I answered cheerfully. "I have some means which I would employ in trade, and I have some skill in fortification, which I desire to place at the disposal of these defenceless communities. If all were united in one plan of safety, it would strengthen the bonds of sympathy between them."

"That fits well with my plan," said the Governor.
"The news which I receive from England is bad. Our enemies are in the saddle. We shall soon have to rely on ourselves alone. The moment for open rebellion is not yet, and in the meantime we must avoid and protract."

"Our first business is to look to our defences," said I. "I have already explained to Governor Northcott that, in fortifying one, we help to defend all."

"In this we shall have to go warily," said the Governor, with the prudence which was habitual to him. "Each town controls its own affairs; and, even in Boston, where I am entitled to govern by authority, I am compelled to manage by good will."

"This then is in reality a democracy?" said I with a wonder which I concealed imperfectly.

"Nothing was further from my mind than the establishment of a democracy, when I was appointed Governor by the Company in London. But the thing is inevitable; and the years which are left to me will be spent in striving to obtain for every element in the community its due share in the government."

Before we parted I went over the matters which the Deputy had brought up, the wearing of prohibited boots, communion with the church, the entertainment of strangers, and the purchase of a house. To all this the Governor replied that he would report that he had taken private interest in me, that I was correct in the main doctrines of religion, and of the proper quality to advise, and consult.

Early next morning he sent to the tavern for me, and informed me that I was free to establish myself in the town, and that I had been elected to the post

of Assistant, with freedom to attend the meetings of the court.

At the first meeting which happened that day, I was presented to many notable persons, and afterwards grew to know them well. The matter of the fortifications received a large debate, along with others which seemed of equal importance to the meeting, — approving of houses of entertainment, appointing surveyors, searchers of measures, impounders of cattle, packers of fish, and corders of wood; regulating the planting of trees; and levying fines for all manner of disdemeanours, such as dangerous chimneys, noisome pits, and entertaining dissolute persons. In the end, I was appointed to exercise my faculty, and I lost no time in setting about the task. It would occupy my mind until I found shipping for the Virginias, and a man who pursues a vision can undertake the exploit to-morrow as well as to-day.

I made a journey to all the seaport towns which lay round about, and sought diligently for tidings of any ship which arrived from the Virginias, or was about to sail for those ports. At length I was rewarded with news that a ship from the southward had entered Boston Harbour on a voyage to the French settlements. I hurried back and sought out the master on board. He was a fellow of low estate, but Luke Vardy had assured me that he knew the southern ports as intimately as he knew his pockets. He protested that no such ship as the *Bounty* had ever entered the Virginias, and he was so earnest that I believed he spoke the truth. Here then was the end of my quest. There was nothing now to be done but to await Captain Pratt's return.

By all this going to-and-fro I had gained a good knowledge of the country and its needs. I prepared a draft of works to be erected in Corne Hill, of bricks and stone with a parapet of earth. The people of Boston worked one day, Charlestown men the next, then men from Roxbury, and Dorchester. Seeing that I had succeeded in convincing them that it was for the good of all, plans for fortifying Castle Island in the harbour, and the heights of Charlestown, and Dorchester, were included in the draft. Finally, a beacon was set upon the highest hill in Boston to give prompt notice to the surrounding country of any approaching enemy. By all these labours I eased my heart, and brought sleep by night. Love comes with service, and I resolved cheerfully to spend my life in the public cause.

One morning, early in the New Year, when I arose, the ground was covered with a moist fleece of snow. The earth was hard as iron, and the work was at an end. I was now in idleness, and a great longing seized me to possess a home of my own, to provide a nest, though an inmate should be forever wanting. Therefore I purchased a little house, the first which I ever owned, and I busied myself with its furnishing. It stood in a field above the Common, and I bestowed much care upon it, so that in the end it was a pretty good house, with an entry and three rooms below, and two rooms above stairs. In each room was everything which was necessary for comfort, and perhaps even for delicate living, especially a glass cupboard, a set of mirrors, and a great chair with a cushion of needlework. I experienced a light-heartedness in the task, and I gained, besides, some skill in spending money.

CHAPTER XVI

I MAVE seen in the Low Countries a faint breach in the sea-wall through which flowed a fine trickle of water. When next I passed that way, there was a raging flood which an army could not arrest. So now, there happened a division between me and my new companions.

The custom was to hold the Assistants' court once in the week, or oftener, if the Governor deemed it necessary. I had been attending the meetings assiduously, and found that I was quite able to take my own part in any discussion, or contention, which might arise. When I entered the town-hall, the meeting of which I am about to speak was in session; for I had been detained by several persons who had knowledge that important business would be transacted, and desired to consult with me. They gave me to understand that the court of Assistants was being watched, and that doubtful decisions would not be received with such sweetness of temper as had prevailed on previous occasions.

The Deputy occupied the chair. The seats were not dignified, and the Assistants took their places without reference to order or appointment. There was no clerk to record the proceedings, so that each member was free to speak the thing which was in his mind, though this was contrary to the desire of some. Indeed, John Cotton had demanded the services of a recorder on the ground

that there had been a scribe's chamber in the house of Ahasuerus.

The court was occupied with the case of two young maids and two young men, their ground of offence being that, on the Sabbath, they did convene, and walk in the street, upon no religious occasion. The more forward of the young men protested that he was contracted in marriage to the girl. He was assured that the charge would be withdrawn if he married the girl upon the spot. To this he made the sensible reply that it was his intention to ratify the union, but he would not be coerced by any man. Thereupon they were adjudged to stand upon their bare feet before the church door. The thing was revolting to me, and the revolt grew as if it had been the seed of a gourd.

I was in no good temper for the discussion of the next subject which was proposed: Shall we have war with the Indians or no? I advised to await the return of the Governor who had gone on a second mission to the Wampanoags; but the court would not hear of it. They were all for war, especially the two ministers, Thomas Wilson and Henry Davenport.

"Have we no treaty with these people?" I demanded of the Deputy.

"There is a treaty since the time of Governor Carver," he admitted, "executed with the Sagamore of the Wampanoags, by which neither he nor his should injure any of ours. If they did, he was to send the offenders to us for punishment, and we were to do the like in respect of any of ours who should injure them. Also, if any tribe warred against him unjustly, we should aid him, and he was to do the like in respect of us."

"And how has this treaty been observed?" I asked again.

"This treaty was observed for many years; but, since the tribes are fickle in their nature, they shift their allegiance, and make new alliances from time to time. When a new generation arose, which knew us not, nor remembered the days when we dealt kindly with them, suspicions arose that they were preparing for war. The Chief was summoned to Taunton, and though at first he was incautious in his carriage, in the end he set his hand to a paper, and confessed that, through the naughtiness of his heart, he had violated the covenant by taking up arms with evil intent. He was recommended to humble himself, else he might expect to smart for it, and he agreed to pay a hundred pounds in such things as he had. In token of submission, he was to send in five wolves' heads a year, if he could get them."

"And how has this new convention been observed?" I enquired.

"We all know that Zachary Smith has recently been found massacred in the woods of Dedham," the Deputy replied, but in so moderate a tone that Mr. Wilson could no longer restrain his speech. His face was working with passion, and he arose to give greater force to his words.

"Too long," he cried, "we have laboured in love with these naked slaves of the devil. The time has come to make their habitation a desert."

"We must tear up this nest of idolators," Henry Davenport assented, "else the punishment of Ahab shall be ours. I agree with my brother who has a

wonderful skill in searching out hypocrites, as well as false worshippers." He looked at me sharply as he uttered these uncivil words.

"This matter was receiving a temperate discussion," said I modestly. "It is an affair of state. There is need of argument, not passion: and I am amazed at this bloody-mindedness in men whose business is concerned with peace and not with fighting."

"This is not an affair of state; it is an affair of the church," Mr. Wilson broke in, unable to endure the orderliness of debate.

"In the exercise of war," I continued, "I have seen many things, unseen by you, which should make us backward in incurring its barbarity."

"Has the murder of Zachary Smith in itself no bar-barity?" the Deputy demanded sharply.

"Quite so. Yet I counsel forbearance, even if these untaught creatures have been led astray by the evil in their hearts."

"Captain Dexter is tinctured with the heresy of the Quakers," said Mr. Davenport, with a sneer in his voice.

"Like them, I admit we should hesitate to draw the sword — save in defence of a principle." Remembrance of those gentle women in grey, whom I had seen upon the sea, gave moderation to my words.

"Captain Dexter has informed us that he has made warfare his business; therefore it ill becomes him to talk to us of principles, or lay his hand upon those whose business is the teaching of truth." Mr. Davenport looked around the court for approval, as he spoke, and that made me the more resolute.

"There is no better implement than the sword for the

testing of what is true, and what is false, in action and in speech."

"You do wrong to magnify temporal things. We have the word of God to guide us. We have borne the heat and burden of the day. It is not seemly that you who are but newly come amongst us should assume to judge us, or manifest a confidence in your own carnal wisdom." Mr. Wilson thrust his finger in my face, but I was not to be put aside from my desire for peace.

"War and truth are not always separable," I said earnestly. "I am not inexpert in the business; yet I have never drawn the sword, nor shall I again, save when justice cries loudly in my ears. If I urge peace, I urge it for the well-being of all who have cast in their lot in this poor place."

"You will admit, I think," said Mr. Davenport, "that you are inexpert in the Scriptures, and so disqualified from meddling with the things of God. You boast yourself that you are a soldier, and yet you decline a soldier's business. In this event, I think you had better betake yourself to tilling the ground, in company with the Quakers beyond the Bay."

"I am sufficiently expert," I retorted hotly, "to appreciate the value of that excellent scripture: in multis sermonibus invenietur stultitia. It is for your ear, and I repeat it in the original tongue."

The Indian business was over for that day, and Mr. Davenport left the court in anger. When the session was resumed after the mid-day meal, he returned, and in his company was the Reverend John Cotton. I knew that something was afoot, but to my relief Mr. Mayhew

also entered; for, in the main, he would be for reasonableness and quiet.

"I adjure you all to civility and order," cried the Deputy addressing the meeting; for there was a disposition on the part of the Assistants to gather in groups, and one or two came to my side, and praised me for having openly withstood the two ministers of religion. When order was restored, the Deputy introduced the matter of the new tax which it was proposed to levy upon all the inhabitants with, or without, their consent.

"You are following a line of conduct which has landed many a dynasty in ruin," I declared, being resolute to bring the matter to a point. "It has been held of old that no men who are free will consent to be taxed, but by their own consent; else are they not free but slaves."

"We are here to build up a bulwark against evil, not to make an experiment of freedom." By that I knew why Mr. Cotton had been brought in such haste to the meeting.

"Unless men first be free, you need no bulwark, for the evil is already entered in," I said.

"We require no elaborate experiment," Mr. Cotton replied, "to show that what you would call a democracy is no fit government either for church or commonwealth."

"There is a great gulf fixed between things civil and things religious," I declared, for I saw that nothing was to be gained by handling the matter delicately.

"We have come into these parts to make a society after a model, tried and approved by God. All who agree with us may come, and join in this design. Those who disagree may go elsewhere." Mr. Cotton looked about him with confidence, as if the matter were closed; but Mr. Wilson broke in upon the silence which had fallen upon the meeting.

"Else how shall we escape from the hirelings of the devil," he cried, "who are going to and fro in the earth in the guise of schismatics and heretics? Of such this community must be purged. There are, I lament to say, in this New England, assemblages of ungovernable persons. Let all who are of a like mind betake themselves hence with their mingle-mangle of religion." The Deputy grew angry in turn.

"We are not assembled to discuss this wide theme," he protested from his chair. "We are here to regulate a matter of government."

"It is a matter of government and religion also," Mr. Cotton retorted, "whether we shall use the authority which we possess for the levying of a tax for the establishment, and propagation, of pure religion. We have already decreed that none but professing men shall have a voice and vote. The others are to obey, else this community is but an assembly and not a church."

"And what do you propose in case any shall refuse to pay the tax?" I asked with some curiosity.

"We shall compel him," cried Mr. Wilson with great zest.

"What if he make it a matter of conscience to refuse?" I demanded again.

"We are tolerant of all tolerable opinions," replied Mr. Cotton, who laboured under the inconvenience of too voluble a tongue; "but if a man refuse to be convinced of the truth, he is sinning against conscience,

and it is not against the liberty of conscience to coerce him."

"This is the oppression which you left England to escape," I declared.

"It is clear," the Deputy said to me not unkindly, "that you have not learned the first rudiments of our government. By our charter the magistrates are entitled to regulate the church, and to compel all who dwell herein to observe its ordinances. It has long since been decided that none shall be admitted to the freedom of this body politic, but such as are members of the church."

"Then it is the magistrates who regulate the church, and not the ministers?" I asked with humility, but I might as well have cast a firebrand. The three ministers protested, and would not cease till the Deputy did threaten to close the court, but at length Mr. Mayhew made himself heard.

"We are seekers after purity," he said in a voice of great earnestness. "We have strained and sifted the seed, if thereby we may establish a church in harmony with the expressed will of God; and," turning to me, he continued with pain and tenderness in his voice, "I am grieved to find a man of your quality detracting from our purpose and design."

"I yield to none in my desire for purity of doctrine," I declared as earnestly as he; "if such can be discovered; but I apprehend that there is need of an amicable behaviour and a winsomeness of conduct towards all. We can at the same time be friends," I urged in a pleasant way; "for friendship is of more value than a doctrine which can be disputed."

"I do not deny the value of this quality," came from the chair; "but until men acquire the rudiments of docility, there can be no government either of the church or of the state."

"Yet," I protested mildly, "there are many well-ordered communities where a wide distinction is made between the things which pertain to Cæsar, and the things which pertain to God."

"You refer to the settlements upon the Connecticut River," said Mr. Davenport, "which are not settlements but schools of atheism. So far as in us lies we shall keep the devil out of our Eden, rather than struggle with him after he has gained an entrance."

"I came into this place," I continued, "determined to be a reasonable and agreeable companion. I know that many of you are of a strong and vehement spirit, and I would yield much to you; but I have learned from my past experience that wisdom will not die with this church or with that."

"You were not bidden to come within this jurisdiction," cried Mr. Wilson hotly, and the trouble broke out afresh.

"I am as free to come within this jurisdiction as to go elsewhere," I retorted, for I had become heated also.

"These territories are held from the king, and they are committed unto us."

"These territories never belonged to the king," I protested loudly. "And I am much deceived if the day be far distant when it will be convenient for you to adopt the same view."

"I beseech you have a care," the Deputy interposed. "If these expressions are noised abroad they will work

our ruin. The posture of affairs in respect of our charter is delicate, and not a fit matter for discussion. We have spent the best part of the day and have accomplished nothing, either in relation to the Indian business, or the tax; and there is yet another matter which urgently demands attention."

"What case is this?" I asked peaceably, for I was glad the brawl was at an end. "I have no other desire than to expedite the business of the court."

"It is the case of a young man who is now in prison."

"Upon what charge?"

"Upon the charge of having maligned us; but there are other matters which do not appear upon the surface."

"In what way does this malignancy appear?"

"He wrote a letter into England, a most unclean production, which we intercepted."

"Will you not read this letter?" I asked. "This thing is new to me, as I have been much engaged in going from place to place upon the public business of defending the colonies." So much of the letter was read as the court would suffer.

"Would it not be well," I asked, "to summon the young man, and ascertain the grounds for his action—how much is true, and how much false?"

"Do you then pretend that any of it is true?" cried Mr. Wilson with rising anger.

"It is not wholly false. It is partly true."

"There must be an end to all business," Mr. Wilson protested, addressing the chair, "if this obstinacy be permitted in the court. The young man is in prison. Let him be kept there."

"That is for the court to decide," I said. "In any case I shall exercise the privilege of an Assistant and visit him in the prison."

"We thought to manage this business quietly," the Deputy explained, as he turned to me; "but your perverseness prevents it. There is something lying beneath all this, and the young man is like to be our ruin."

"Is the matter of the letter then only a subterfuge?" I demanded with energy.

"What we did, in your absence, it is true, was done only after mature deliberation, and in our own defence."

"It must be strange conduct which requires a defence of this nature," I protested. "Who is this young man?"

"He came here in the *Prudent Sara* soon after your own arrival," the Deputy replied, "and lived in Luke Vardy's tavern, rejoicing in his wit and good liquor."

"That is nothing against him," I said in amelioration of the offence. "I spent some time in that hostlery myself, and can testify that the man gives a pleasurable entertainment."

"As for the kind of entertainment which you find pleasurable I know not," said the Deputy; "but this young man defied our authority, and garnished his conversation with oaths."

"Did you not learn the business which led him so far? Was he a person of some figure?" I asked.

"He boasted himself that he was a king's officer, and threatened us with the vengeance of his master."

"From what I know of the sentiment which prevails in high quarters in England against us, that might not be hard to procure. What cause of grievance did he allege?"

"He was breathing out threatenings against us, because we had deported a young woman to the Bahamas."

"What interest did he pretend in her?"

"That we cannot rightly guess. At one time he claimed to be her brother; but, being questioned, he shifted his ground, and professed that he was contracted to her in the bonds of love."

"It may have been so," I said, for I remembered the situation of Beatrix Sherwyn and her foster brother.

"But, lover or brother, why should you interfere with his search? It is a laudable adventure, whichever assumption you adopt."

"We do not know where she is gone."

"Well: why not allow him to follow his harmless inclination, and make the discovery for himself?"

"We are afraid that some mischance may have be-fallen her."

"But why was the young woman deported?" I persisted.

"She was a Quaker," Mr. Wilson cried out in a high voice of passion, and the foam came in his mouth.

"And what is a Quaker?" I demanded. "Since I am come into this community I have heard of nothing but Quakers, as if they were the worst fiends in the pit."

"They are the worst heretics which this age has produced," Mr. Wilson continued to declaim with vehemence. "They are the most venomous toward these churches. They pretend unto light, and yet

lead the bewildered souls of men into darkness. They are the bitterest opponents of that good order, civil and sacred, which we have erected in this colony. The ordinances of baptism, of the bread and wine, they affirm are Popish inventions; and beasts and liars are the best terms which they can find for us." Mr. Wilson's voice gave out, overwhelmed by his passion.

I looked about the meeting to learn from the faces of the Assistants, if all gave assent to this fearful indictment. The laymen were indifferent or angry; the Deputy was silent and embarrassed; Mr. Mayhew stirred uneasily in his seat, as if he would give utterance to his view, but Mr. Davenport prevented him.

"Since it is information which you desire," cried that man of God, "I shall tell you that, for me, I shall keep my own skirts clean, and will do what I can to purge these borders of pollution."

"I was asking for information," said I quietly, "not for a manifestation of passion;" and, turning to Mr. Mayhew who evidently had a thing upon his mind, I enquired of him if he had any first-hand knowledge of this sect.

"I cannot say much from my own knowledge," he admitted, but he told what he knew, and I could find no evil in it. The Deputy was irritated.

"This is not a seminary," he said pointedly at Mr. Mayhew. "We are here to take further order concerning these Quakers. Shall they be suitably punished or not, in case they have the hardihood to return?"

"What have you already accomplished?" I enquired with a show of mildness.

"We are only yet at the threshold. The besom is in our hands and we shall make all clean." Mr. Wilson's face shone, as he declared his resolve.

"Is the evil grown so great; and do many yet remain to be dealt with?" I asked.

"As well demand how many fiends are in the pit," was the answer which he flung out.

"What measures have you already adopted?" The thing was new to me and I desired all the information I could get, against the time I should visit the young man in prison.

"At the last court two were suitably punished and sent to their own place," Mr. Wilson admitted in a sulking voice.

"Did they go away in an orderly manner?" I demanded, thinking that these were of the number who had been deported to the Bahamas.

"They did indeed go away in a seemly manner," said the minister, with melancholy glee; "for they were turned off under the direction of the Chief Marshal, Edward Michelson, the same who officiated in that capacity towards the Indians who murdered Captain Stone."

I was sick at heart. My vision of Beatrix amongst the women fled away. Better it was a fantasy of the brain than a reality, else she might have been of those who had suffered these indignities. My only thought was to free myself from this society, and I cared not what I said; for after much talk the opinion inclined to further severity.

"This is a business in which I have no skill," I protested again; "but I have remarked that the fire of

heresy is never quenched by the bellows of persecution." The ministers were not abashed, and Mr. Davenport spoke for them.

"We are but applying salve, where we need the knife and the searing iron. It is already enacted that, if any entertain a Quaker for an hour, he shall be fined. If he persist, he is to have an ear cut off. If he repeat the offence, he shall lose them both, and be bored through the tongue with a hot iron."

"Ay," said the Deputy sadly, "we have made due trial of leniency."

"And what purpose has been served by our leniency?" cried Mr. Wilson. "I propose the penalty of death upon every Quaker who, having been banished, shall return to this colony."

For a moment I allowed myself to suppose that the vision which I had seen was a reality, and that Beatrix Sherwyn might come within the compass of this law. All prudence left me.

"I have never listened to such an outburst of folly," I protested with vigour in my voice, and scorn in my tone. "The means which you propose are neither just in themselves, nor useful for checking the progress of falsehood, or of truth." Mr. Cotton was upon his feet in an instant.

"I demand to know what viper is this which has fastened itself upon our hand," he cried. "It is like we must proceed to reform this court, before we deal with the Quakers."

"If," said I, "you think to deal with me as you would with one of those misguided creatures, then I say the thing has been tried before with immoderate

success; and I cannot see that you will better succeed. You may be reformed in religion; you are not thereby reformed in language or in manners."

"Captain Dexter, I fear, has dwelt too long with those who provoked him to violent talk," said the Deputy reprovingly.

"You need not bend your brows upon me," I protested. "I know what is right, and what is wrong, and I know that there are some who hate the thing which appears to them to be false, worse than they fear death. It may be that of such are the Quakers. I am merely a private Christian with a soul to save, and private men, as you are, need have no fear of turning me from my purpose."

"This meeting of the court is at an end," Mr. Dudley declared, as he left his seat. "We were met to discuss the danger of war with the Indians, to decide upon the levy of a tax, to dispose of the case of this troublesome young man, to regulate the conduct of dangerous persons within the colony. All four are yet unsettled, and nothing has resulted save violent language. I shall consult with the Governor." Whereupon, the court broke up in an ill-humour.

CHAPTER XVII

THE evening of the day upon which this turbulent meeting was held found me afoot on my way to the prison, but I turned aside to the Governor's house to see if he had returned, and I found that it was so. Prompt as I was, John Cotton was already closeted with him, but I was admitted.

"I hear," said Governor Pendleton, "that there were great doings in the court to-day."

"There certainly was some free speaking and warmth of debate," I admitted cheerfully.

"And I understand that you project a visit of great good nature. It is a noble thing to visit the afflicted."

"It is a privilege which I always seize, when occasion offers."

"From what I hear you played a large part in England during the recent commotion." The Governor looked at me with much respect, but his air was very politic, as he uttered these temperate words.

"I made myself observed," I admitted modestly.

"Then do you not think that the young man is safer where he is, than at large making false charges against us, and charges against you, which may have something of truth in them?" The Governor assumed an aspect of innocency, and Mr. Cotton pursed out his ruddy

lips, and placed his finger tips together. They both agreed that they had provided me with food for reflection. I did reflect, but only for a moment.

"This is a new aspect of the case, I admit; but if the only offence which is chargeable to this young man is that he wrote a merry letter into England, and interfered on behalf of persecuted women, I shall myself communicate with his friends."

"Then you will be doing only as you may soon require to be done by," Mr. Cotton said in a non-chalant manner.

"If you have threats to make," said I, "make them openly."

"I need to make no threats. Since you came within this jurisdiction you have made enemies enough to cause you apprehension, should you be compelled to return to England."

"As for my return to England that will have to be delayed until I see the outcome of my adventure in the *Covenant*, where Captain Pratt is guarding my interest."

"Do not lean too heavily upon a reed. Captain Pratt's return is ever uncertain. All reeds are liable to break."

"You talk of reeds. I warn you that there is a strong staff which has never yet failed any who trusted to it. Magistrates and ministers are not everything to a people which has learned to revolt against bishop and king. There is here a semblance of agreement; but the people are ever resolute to stand for liberty, and the public interest. I am not alone nor without friends in this colony. Wisdom and piety in you they will

heed. Hardness and injustice they will not endure for ever."

"Clearly you are of our enemies," said Mr. Cotton, as if he were convinced.

"Let us discuss one thing at a time; and to conclude the first, I am resolved to learn the whole story which this unfortunate man has to relate."

"We cannot prevent your entering the prison. We can prevent your leaving it." The Governor was quite definite.

"Now that you make open threats, all discussion is at an end. If you proceed against me in an orderly way for exercising my privilege as an Assistant of visiting this stranger, I make no demur; but I warn you that I shall oppose force to force."

"And I warn you that, if you persist in your obstinacy, you will be convented to a special meeting of the General Court; and, I have no doubt what the issue will be." Mr. Cotton spoke with great firmness.

"I am content," I said; "and I promise you that the whole question of authority and obedience shall have a large discussion."

"And I promise you that it will not. We shall have more important matters to discuss." The Governor looked at me with meaning and distress in his face.

"Do you then seek out the young man in the prison," he said, not unkindly; "and I shall join you at your own house within the hour, and have further talk of this."

As I was going to the prison on the hill, a thought came into my mind. I was not going to be trapped. I turned aside to my house, and put beneath my doublet a light shirt of steel, which had been friendly to me in many a sharp dispute. I thrust a pistol or two in my belt, and put a sword beneath my cloak. Also, I thought a short bar of iron, a bundle of stout wires, and a small saw, would be no encumbrance, in case a door might shut behind me by the wind. I had not forgotten how I longed for those humble tools that night when I lay in the Newgate.

And so I resumed my journey of discovery, thinking of the inconvenience which I had suffered when I was laid in bonds, and how intolerable it would be, if Beatrix were alive, and I were prevented by force from coming to her. Now that I was divided from her by the cloudy prison walls of death, I could assist another who was separated from his love only by earthly barriers.

I reached the prison in the dull grey of the winter evening, and was quickly admitted by the gaoler. He had once been a soldier, and was yet an honest fellow, as I proved one evening when he sat with me in Luke Vardy's tavern. When I came within, the gloom was deeper than ever, and a horror of the place moderated my temper. The words of Mr. Cotton came back with force. I had been indiscreet. There was little between me and a return to England, save the uncertain coming of Captain Pratt, or an appeal to force.

These reflections gave me caution, yet I advanced to a second door which the gaoler opened; and, passing through, I stood in a long corridor. At the extreme end was a high barred window, and gazing out upon the free world was the stranger. As he half turned at the sound of the opening door, the feeble light fell

upon his handsome face, but it was sufficient to disclose that this was the young man who once stood for me, when I was engaged in the brawl with Captain Kirke in the London tavern, the Swan with Two Necks.

The moment was one of some difficulty. This was a king's officer. If I disclosed my name, and he were resolute for vengeance in spite of my well-meant efforts on his behalf, my fate was sealed. It might even come to a question of my safety against his, as Mr. Cotton had been careful to point out. As he advanced to meet me in the prison twilight, with proud, and elegant carriage, I saw no sign of recognition in his face. Upon the instant I forgot that he was an officer, and saw only the man, the prisoner, the lover like myself. I extended my hand and he refused it.

"I am come as a friend to offer you justice," I said, with the kindliest tone which I could employ.

"Then it is the first friendship or justice which I have encountered in this country."

"I am here at some risk to search into your case, and to offer you assistance in your defence," I persisted in spite of his coldness.

"I have no case which requires searching into," he cried with passion in his voice. "I came here searching for one who was near to me as my own life; and when I discovered the hardships which she endured, I threatened the magistrates with the vengeance of the king. Thereupon I was committed to this vile prison, and so am unable to return to England or proceed with my search. That is my case."

"I once spent a night in captivity myself," I said with much sympathy.

"For the captivity I do not care, save in so far as it interferes with my business; but it cannot be for long. They seized my letters, but some escaped. The magistrates do not know that a Commission will shortly arrive to search for those regicides who were concerned in the murder of His Majesty's blessed father; and I promise you that there will be a thorough search into other matters as well—the mishandling of tender women, his loyal subjects." There was exultation in his voice as he conveyed this astounding intelligence, but I managed to conceal my own concern.

"I am a stranger in this community," I said. "It was but this morning I learned of your connexion with the Quakers. I did not even know what was meant by the word."

"Nor did I either, until I came to this town. To me a Quaker and a Puritan were alike."

"At any rate," I protested, "I am convinced that you are detained unjustly, and I shall bring your case to the General Court, if you do not obtain release before the next meeting."

"But I understand that the meeting will not be held till the month of May," the officer said with awakened interest.

"My information is that there will be a special court very presently, for I myself am to be brought before it."

"It may be that I shall have your company in the meantime," he said lightly. "I make you free of such entertainment, as I have to offer."

"Even that would scarcely atone for loss of liberty," I replied with an air as light as his own.

"But, how is it that you expect to escape arrest, and speak so confidently of the future?" the prisoner enquired.

For answer I dropped the point of my sword upon the flags with a harsh clatter, for we were now seated on two small stools, with a little table between us.

"You are also a soldier," he said with much respect, as he peered at me through the gloom.

"I served my country." The young man arose, and bowed graciously.

"What charge have they against you?" he demanded with a new interest.

"Mainly matters of religion, I suppose; but the immediate opposition to me has arisen from this business of the Quakers, and my interference in your cause."

"This conduct of yours is noble," he declared. "If your case miscarry, it may be that I can offer you some assistance, and I shall do it to the extremity of my power — if the king's Commission arrive, before I perish of the cold in this unwholesome confinement."

We had grown as cordial as two brothers. I was on the point of revealing my name, and reminding him of our former meeting — commission or no commission — when we were startled by the sound of running feet in the passage.

"Quick!" cried the gaoler, as he burst into the corridor. I leaped to my feet. The officer kept his place. The gaoler forced me from the room, and hurried me by a crooked way to his private door.

"The magistrates have had a conference," he said as he thrust me without into the lane, "and the watch is on the way to secure your arrest."

"This prisoner of yours is my friend," I said, as I thanked the honest fellow, and I marched up the street, as bold as if I were not evading the watch.

I stopped short in the road. I had left behind the little tools, and the iron bar. If the prisoner escaped; well and good. He had promised me assistance, and I believed that his word would hold good against magistrates or king. I paused only for an instant, and then resumed my way, my spirits rising. By the time I reached my house I was prepared to encounter every magistrate in New England; and, when I found the Governor within, I rallied him upon his downcast countenance, for he was grave and perplexed at my lightness of manner and speech.

"The fiends of hatred are broke loose from the pit since I am gone," he said with bitter complaint.

"Then we shall drive them back again," I cried gaily, leaping in the air, with a feint, and a parry, and a thrust.

"Are things in reality not so serious as they are reported to me by the magistrates and ministers?" There was evident relief in the Governor's face, when he saw my lightness of demeanour.

"Serious! No. I did but rail at them, and tell them truth. I intend them no harm."

"But they intend harm to you."

"A mere harmless intention. It disturbs me only in so far as I hate men who have hatred for their fellow-man."

"They have gone to extremes, and have issued a warrant for your arrest, which, I fear, I cannot recall without bringing down the House of Assistants upon my head."

"Whom do they expect will execute it?"

"The watch, as is customary in such cases."

"And are these watchmen resolute to lose their lives?"

"I cannot say as much from my own knowledge, but we can call the trained bands to their support."

"The men who laboured with me upon the fortifications? Have you not observed a tendency in all countries for the people to array themselves against those who set up for rulers, especially if they be hard and unbending? I tell you in New England also it is so."

"I abhor a conflict," said the Governor earnestly.

"Our affairs are working out under the Providence of God, and in due season the limits of the authority which ought to be possessed by governor, magistrates, ministers, and people will define themselves."

"I am as earnestly for the welfare of this community as any within its borders," I declared. "I would withdraw from it, did I not believe that it demanded my services, and there is no shipping to the Virginias."

"Indeed," said the Governor calmly, "the suggestion that you should withdraw was in my own mind."

"There are two reasons besides the lack of transport why it cannot be so. You have need of my experience in the conflict with the Indians, which must inevitably come to pass, and I am unwilling that those who disagree with me in matters of politics and religion should charge me with cowardice in the face of the General Court. I even entertain the hope of propagating true principles before the congregation of the people."

"I must disclose my whole mind to you," said the Governor. "I am for quietness. In the end it will serve best. I would guard you to the utmost of my ability; but it may come that I shall be obliged at the General Court to take sides with my fellow-magistrates against you, and work your ruin."

"I absolve you from all claims of friendship," I declared. "I cannot absolve myself from the duty which lies upon me, even if it be at my own peril—even to the losing of my life. I shall oppose force to force. That is the safety of all freedom, a resolution to resort to force in its defence."

"God forbid that it should come to that," cried the Governor. "In the meantime, I shall assume the risk of withholding the magistrates' warrant." The tears stood in his eyes and also in mine, as he arose to depart.

CHAPTER XVIII

NEXT morning Luke Vardy came to my house whilst I was yet abed. He reported that there was a hue and cry that the prisoner had escaped.

"Where do they guess that he has gone?" I enquired, with a thought in my heart that I should follow him.

"Certain travellers from the South profess that they encountered him near Braintree, where is a camp of Indians with no friendly intent toward us."

"May he not have perished in the prison?" I asked.

"Indeed, there are not wanting those who profess that he died of a putrid fever which was generated by the cold, and nocturnal air. They have even propagated the foul suspicion that he was done to death secretly."

"This event does not improve my situation," I confessed, as its full force came home to me. If the Commissioners arrived from England, there was now no one to speak for me. If the magistrates ordered my return, there would be no intercessor for me with the tyrant which sat on the English throne.

"I have heard that something has befallen," said my old landlord, "and I am eager to know. It might be that I could offer you advice, or even assistance."

I told him all — that I was in danger of being recalled to England, that the magistrates were in harmony

with the design of my enemies, and that I was resolute to resist even by force of arms.

"In that," said the honest publican, "you will find some support. There are many stout fellows who are enamoured of your capacity, and some who have a private interest in the adventures of the *Covenant*. Their regard for Captain Pratt will make them strong allies of yours."

"I have no desire to make a brawl," I replied to this comforting assurance; "but I am resolved not to stand, and suffer injustice dumbly, in a cause for which I have already accomplished something, and suffered much."

"You had best not go abroad to-day," the man advised. "Things are at their height. I shall hear what is being said, and will promptly bring you word."

During the day several persons visited me, and most of them were bitter in their speech, complaining that the magistrates were intolerable, and that the pretensions of the church could no longer be endured. Before the evening a considerable revolt was under way, and one plain fellow was so incensed as to make the horrid suggestion that we should invoke the assistance of the Sagamore of the Wampanoags.

At night the Governor returned, and he was grave and gentle. I suppose he thought he was just; but I made the discovery that his mind was narrow, though his heart was large.

"I am come to inform you," he began, "that you are convented by the magistrates to appear before a General Court. So much business of all kinds awaits discussion, we have decided to summon a special meeting,

at which your case can be conveniently heard. And, in view of what I have learned to-day, I must confess that this decision meets with my approval."

"Upon what charge?" I demanded.

"Upon the general conduct which you exercise."

"This proposition meets with my ready assent," I agreed cheerfully. "Sooner or later, the whole matter of authority and obedience must be dealt with, and the present is as good a time as any."

"These are large matters," said the Governor in a wary and politic way. "It will not rest with you to choose the charges upon which you will be tried."

"Shall I be furnished with an account of them?" I asked with some inward misgiving.

"We shall proceed in the usual way," the Governor replied, and we parted in the fashion of friends.

The summons was sent out to the neighbouring towns for a meeting of the General Court, to be held upon the second Saturday in March. I followed hard upon the summons, and talked freely with those who would talk with me. I made it my business to leave the magistrates and ministers to their own devices, and make my appeal to the deputies. These were the principal men in their towns, and I was not a stranger to them. Indeed, I counted many of them amongst my friends, since the days when I went amongst the scattered communities upon the business of public defence.

By this time I had become a person of some consideration in the community, and by appealing to the sound heart of the people, I had no fear that an injustice would be done. The deputies had their votes in the General Court as well as the magistrates. The two

houses sat together. If each voted in a contrary direction, an impasse would occur, and I felt sure from the general feeling that the deputies would not vote against me.

I was moved by no vulgar desire to embarrass the authorities, or to achieve a dialectical triumph. I had considered well of the whole subject, and was filled with a sense of elation that here was an occasion for propagating sound ideas of liberty, and to win a victory for the principles of true government. It was no secret that I had openly allied myself with the people. The ministers and magistrates took no pains to conceal the sentiments which they entertained towards me. Of this I shall offer one example.

According to my custom, I went to the meeting on the Sabbath preceding the assembling of the General Court, and Thomas Wilson preached. He dwelt upon the matter of hypocrites and profane persons, and claimed that the hypocrite was the better of the two. Hypocrites, he declared, gave to God a part of His due, the outward manifestations of religion; the profane gave to God neither the outward nor the inward man. When he had fully elaborated this doctrine, he openly addressed himself to me, and protested that I was a detractor from the ordinances, a profane man secretly; and, as he was speaking from the pulpit, I had to endure the charge in silence.

When the service was at an end, he turned to Mr. Cotton, and I overheard him say: "Did you see the thrust which I gave him in my prayer?"

"It was a shrewd stroke," that man of God replied. From a sense of propriety I abstained from attendance upon the court of Assistants, but on the day following the delivery of this sermon, I was sent for. As I came in, the Governor arose, and read from a paper which he held in his trembling hand:

"The Governor and Assistants have taken note that, in your public teachings and private speech, you have advocated the total divorcement of things civil from things religious; that all forms of doctrine merit equal protection; that it is not competent for the magistrates to take order for regulating the observance of public worship, nor to assess tithes for the same.

"Whereas, Captain Nicholas Dexter, a member of this church, hath broached and divulged divers new, and dangerous, opinions against the authority of the magistrates, and yet maintaineth the same without retraction; it is therefore ordered that the said Captain Dexter shall depart out of this jurisdiction, within four days next ensuing, which, if he neglect to perform, it shall be lawful for the Governor and two of the magistrates to send him to some place out of this jurisdiction, not to return without license from the court."

"This is an important matter which you propose," said I to the Governor. "I should not like to act without advice from the General Court."

"We have but taken upon ourselves to anticipate the decision of the court," he answered me.

"And I shall exercise the same privilege, in respect of the deputies at least."

"The best that can happen to you is that magistrates and deputies will vote in a contrary sense. That is the disorder which, as Governor, I am resolute to avoid."

"By the craft of Satan you have fallen from obedience to God, and are become an obstinate, and impenitent person," Mr. Wilson exclaimed with such violence I thought he would have a stroke.

"If you were content," I said, "to exercise your vocation as watchmen, and pastors, I would yield obedience to your admonitions. But I have never, since I was called into the light, humbled myself before men and tyrants, so do I now refuse to yield. I am what I am proud to confess — a Puritan: you are become what I name you, Persecutors." With this I strode from the room, making all the sound which I could.

When I returned to my house there was a heat in my brain. I could not eat. I could not sit still. It was some relief towards evening to hear the sound of knocking upon my door, and when I opened it the Reverend Increase Mayhew was there. He was in great distress, and would not accept my invitation to sit with me, and discuss the events of the day.

"You spoke resolutely," he said, "and many are taken with an apprehension of your wisdom. But the magistrates are incensed against you. They now fear that you will betake yourself across the Bay to Providence; and, joining with their opponents, give strength to them, and so spread the infection to these churches. Therefore I am come at the peril of my good name to acquaint you that they are taking measures to send you back to England, the more eagerly on account of advices which they have received from London since the meeting broke up to-day."

With this Mr. Mayhew left me. In the face of such intelligence as this there was no prospect of sleep, so

I went abroad to take the air of the evening. Upon my return there was a great light of candles in my upper chamber, and as none were entitled to entrance there, I was in some trouble as to what it might imply. I entered softly, and beheld the leader of the watch, and two stout fellows, descending the stairway with my strong box in their hands.

"By what right do you enter my house after the sun is set?" I cried in a firm voice, for the old way of the wars was upon me. I pulled out my sword, and the man was afraid.

"I am but exercising my function as chief constable," the man said humbly enough.

"I have cloven a man to the chin for a less offence than this."

"I have a warrant for your arrest," the constable said with more assurance.

"You can have no warrant for this felonious intrusion, and I shall see at the point of the sword that you do your business in orderly fashion."

"But, sir," he cried in fresh alarm, "will you not hear my warrant?"

"I shall hear nothing, till you learn better how to perform your duty."

"Sir, I have no experience in such great matters, and would gladly learn the proper procedure of my unpleasant task."

"Then command your fellows to lay down my strong box. Betake yourselves hence, and return in an orderly manner." The watch withdrew and I closed the door. Then there was a sound of knocking, and I opened readily.

"Upon what important business do you disturb my rest at this unseemly hour?" I demanded.

"I have a warrant for your apprehension," the leader replied.

"In whose name does the warrant run?"

"That I cannot say, for I have no skill in letters."

"Then produce the warrant, and I shall have a reading for myself."

"I have here a store of documents which are in my safe keeping, and you shall choose till you find the proper instrument."

The master of the watch was a blockish fellow, and pulling a bundle of papers from his breast he handed them to me. I went through them quickly and found two papers of serious import, an order from Whitehall for the seizure of Captain Pratt for piracy on the high seas, and a general warrant of search, in which my name was mentioned. True, there was no authority under the hand of the Governor, but I had no doubt that it would be quickly forthcoming.

"Since I have undertaken to instruct you in the ordering of your office," I said to the constable, "I shall go through with the matter. Do you return to your masters, and say that Captain Nicholas Dexter could find no warrant agreeable to his wish, neither can all the magistrates of these plantations, nor all the kings of the earth devise an instrument to his liking. Say, too, that you saw in my hand a harsh thing, and if any desire to make proof of what I say, let him enquire of those who have made ample experiment of it. Now, good sir, you will return to those who sent you," and the stupid fellows did as they were instructed.

I was beset before and behind. There was no way to turn, and nothing for it but resort to violence, to rouse my friends, to overcome the government by a display of force, to make an alliance with the scattered communities which were already in rebellion against church and magistracy, to join together in the bonds of a constitution, insuring equal rights to all; in short, to get our backs to the rock, and our faces to the world. My spirits rose and my mind was clear. I reached for my sword, and felt of the sharpness of the blade. I cast powder into the fire, and its perfume filled the room. I drew the odour into my veins, and with it came the spirit and the power for any deed of desperation.

I was putting forth my hand for a light to set in an upper window, as a signal to my friends that the time had come. In the very act it was as if a shadowy hand were laid upon me. I was conscious of a presence, like a face in a vision, a memory in a dream, a glimpse of the everlasting. My heart was naked before me. I recoiled in horror from the evil which I witnessed there, pride, self-will, and all the vices which are so faithfully catalogued in the Scriptures. This enterprise in which I was engaged was a petulant sedition. If I lost my life, I would lose it alone; and I might thereby save it according to the promise. If I perished in the wilderness, it would be in a seemly manner, and without disaster to those who were engaged in their own way in making the right to prevail. Gone was all thought of a dialectical triumph, or victory after strife. Gone too was my regard for the jests of friends, or the jeers of my enemies.

I made such preparations for flight as I could. I took

what gold remained from my store; though it was little enough, once I had converted it into coins for the public service, and for the furnishing of my house. Mostly did it pain me to leave my little place. Here I had been happy, dreaming dreams of what might have been. From my box I also took the only other thing of value which remained, the sprigs of rosemary which I had gathered that blessed night in Michell's churchyard, and I put them with some papers in my breast.

CHAPTER XIX

It had been a bitter winter — this, my first in New England. The wolves had come out of the forest, and had eaten goats which were worth five pounds apiece. The snow yet lay deep upon the ground, and it was a cold night when I left my own fireside to go into the wide world once more. I bound upon my back a pair of snowshoes which I had had from a friendly Indian. I took such weapons as I needed, and such food as I could carry. My one desire was to leave the sleeping town behind me, and I fetched a great circle over rocks and frozen marshes, till I came to the edge of the forest.

If the information which Luke Vardy had given me was correct, that the king's officer, whose escape I had effected, dwelt with the Indians near Braintree, it might be that I could join him, and trust to his generosity of nature. Beyond this I formed no plan, and now the best I could hope was that I might encounter a band of Indians, and be entertained or murdered by them.

I had for my own amusement experimented myself in the use of the snowshoes, and could run as nimbly as an Indian by their ingenious aid. So, when I had fastened them to my feet, I proceeded as cheerfully as a man could, who was in such a situation. By the assistance of the friendly stars I made for the southward, in the direction of Braintree, and when the morning came

I was still toiling along. I appeased my appetite, and took up the journey anew, but by the evening my hunger and weakness were extreme. Night was coming on, and I was without a habitation. Hitherto I had been able to hold a southerly course; but as no good came of it, I gave myself over to aimless wandering in the forest, following the easiest path.

The path grew easier. As I proceeded, I came into a well-beaten track which mounted a hill. As I toiled upward, it grew quite dark, but when I reached the summit my heart dilated with joy. Looking downward, I saw a huge bonfire of pine logs, blazing and roaring in the night air. Indian women were dancing in the warmth, and their savage mates crouched before the coals. A sweet smell of roasting meat came up on the wind, and I greeted the unhallowed spectacle with silent laughter. The crack of a gun, and the whistling of a bullet, was my welcome. It was an armed camp, but I descended boldly into it.

As I drew near, the leader who had been seated on a stump smoking tobacco arose. The fire shone upon his face, and I knew him at once for the stranger whom I had visited in prison, the young man who had stood for me, and spoken kindly to me, when I became involved in a brawl in the London tavern. We advanced to meet each other. He recognized me as his visitor, but I could see from his face that his recollection went no further. The grasp of his hand was the most friendly which I had received since the ice formed upon the rivers, and his voice was winsome as he addressed me.

"This," he said, "is a den of beasts, but it is better than a prison in Boston. Little did I think that you would be ill-used by your own, still less that I should so soon be able to offer you a refuge."

"It is always open to a community to correct discord," I said with apology, "and I make complaint of no one."

"But I do make complaint. I came searching in all honesty for one who was near to me. I was defeated and imprisoned, and death might have come had I not escaped by your design."

"You have quickly discovered a commodious way of life," I said with wonder at the crew of Indians which now surrounded us.

"When I escaped from prison as a fugitive into this wilderness," he exclaimed with bitter recollection of his misery, "I found these savage warriors, and they were put into my hand as a ready weapon against the magistrates of Boston by an adventurer from the French possessions on the St. Lawrence. My temper was so suitable for his purpose that he left them in my hands, and he has passed on to other tribes."

Before I had been driven from Boston there were signs that the country was about to be chastened with the new scourge of an Indian war, and in a moment the full meaning of those signs flashed upon me. With my previous weakness I all but reeled at the shock, and my entertainer observed it.

"But you have need of rest," he said, and in a kindly way he conducted me to the fire, where I was soon restored with food, and warmth, and hot French brandy.

Here was a great work, a bold and hardy man with a weapon in his hand, dangerous to my people, and ready for employment. I could not find it in my heart to blame him. He had been dealt with falsely.

We were sitting upon two adjacent stumps of trees. The fire glowed and hissed. The Indians crouched upon blankets or skins, whilst one of their number, with a piece of board across his knees, was chopping tobacco with a scalping knife, and entertaining the company with obscene jests, if I might judge by their lewd laughter.

"This is a natural way of life in very truth," I said surveying the scene.

"I had rather dwell in this primitive way, than with hard and uncharitable men who profess the gospel, and deny its operation," my companion replied cheerfully.

"I myself am not bitterly pious," I remarked. "I was neither a pleasant, nor agreeable companion to many in Boston. Yet this appears to be but a slothful and renegade life."

"If you join yourself with me you shall have no cause to lament for its slothfulness. There is enough to do, inculcating industry in the minds of these ignorant men, and so make better warriors of them."

"Do they manifest any towardness to a reformation of their lives and character?" I asked doubtfully.

"Their reformation concerns me little, and the influence which I have gained is only such as one might acquire over the brute beasts. I offer you a share in this easy way of life."

"It is not ease which I crave. It is exercise and occupation."

"Then you shall have both," he said in a passion.
"The men of Boston defeated my search. They de-

barred me from returning to England, and are yet watching every ship. You have your own grievance against them. I offer you a share in my revenge."

"I am a soldier," said I, for the time for speech had come. "I have too long served my country to be recreant to a principle, for the sake of venting my private spleen."

"But this is not my country, nor my religion," he protested.

"These men are our own flesh and blood. We have a common mother. We have quarrelled amongst ourselves. Let us not commit the infamy of joining with her enemies and ours." The young man took his head between his hands, as he sat upon the stump.

"I admit that I am not wholly satisfied," he said, "now that my temper is cooled. But what else can I do?"

"You admitted to me in the prison that your friends were shortly to arrive from England to search for those who were forward in withstanding the late king. Why not wait here in quietness until they arrive?"

"But I cannot forget the evils which I have endured. Nothing but blood will purge my memory."

"You have suffered nothing more than I have," I said, casting myself upon his mercy. "I was imprisoned in England. I escaped by the merest accident. I was driven across the seas as an exile, and now I am cast out from amongst my own."

"Can it be that you are of the proscribed?" he asked in perplexity and yet with respect.

"It is my good part to deserve this honour."

"Then you must have played the part of a great soldier," he said with increased respect.

"I had my duty to do. I served my country."

"And I served my king."

"I am well aware of that. I witnessed it. Do you not remember the day when you stood up for me amongst the king's officers in the London tavern, when Captain Kirke would have had my life?" My hand was upon my sword, the old habit strong upon me.

"There is no need of weapons between us," said the stranger in a gracious and courtly manner, as a flame of intelligence leaped in his eyes. He placed a hand upon my shoulder and all but drew me to him.

"And you were aware of this," he continued, "when I was vaunting my power in the prison, and threatening you with the vengeance of the king."

"I knew that you were a king's officer."

"And yet you secured my release, knowing that it might work your own ruin?"

"I could not do otherwise. I loved you, for I was myself once bound by the cords of love."

"This is the first kindly word which I have had since I crossed the seas, and it draws the sting from my resentment. You are unable, and I am unwilling to return to the land of our birth, so it would appear that we must make shift to remain together as friends, for I have every reason to be friendly with you."

"I cannot understand this disinclination towards returning to your own country," I said, "since there is no such impediment as exists in my own case."

"There is none to whom I care to return," he said mournfully. "I had an estrangement from my father. We parted in anger and now he is dead."

"Did he perish in a disaster of fire?" I cried in confusion at this strange intelligence.

"He lost his life and his means in that way," the stranger answered calmly, but with enquiry in his face.

"Tell me more of this disaster," I demanded with increasing wonder. "Who else perished in it?"

"A valiant soldier who dwelt under our roof. He had once saved my father's life, and the life of his ward."

"And his daughter by adoption was not carried to rest in the churchyard of Michell's, Corne Hill! I saw it with my own eyes."

"None perished but my father and a maidservant, who was taken up dead as her mistress, and this Captain Dexter."

"But I am Nicholas Dexter."

"And I am Geoffrey Sherwyn."

We had been seated upon the stumps of two trees, as I have said, which had long grown side by side as brothers. With this great intelligence we leaped to our feet, and gazed, each into the other's eyes.

"And your sister is yet alive?" I demanded with as much restraint as I could exercise.

"She was not my sister, and I do not know if she is yet alive. That is the quest upon which I was employed when the men of Boston laid hands upon me."

"This was courageous conduct," said I, "undertaking so great a journey for one who was not bound to you by domestic ties."

"I was bound to her by the dearer ties of love. My father also loved her. That was the cause of our estrangement." and he turned away his face in shame.

It was a bitter moment to me. I was in a frenzy to disclose my passion also; but the remnant of reason which was left taught me that he who meddles with

the love of a friend has already made an enemy. But was this not a means of drawing aside Captain Sherwyn from his design against my people — encouraging his search for Beatrix? My heart told me what would follow, when Beatrix learned that no barrier of brother-hood existed between her and the companion of her childhood.

"Tell me," he implored, "about this disaster of fire." Then I related the whole affair, my arrest and trial, my rescue and entertainment, the awful violence of the catastrophe, my escape over the roofs, the burdens which were borne from the burning house, and the melancholy spectacle of the burial of the merchant and the maiden. Two things alone I kept back, my passion for Beatrix and the certainty that it was her guardian, his father, who had precipitated the catastrophe. Captain Sherwyn questioned me closely upon all the events of the evening, little suspecting the pain which he caused, as he probed my wound. When it became unendurable, I turned to him for the information which touched me so closely.

"Tell me," I said, "upon what you fix the belief that she is still alive."

The fire had fallen into a mass of glowing coals. The Indians cast flat stones into the midst. When they were red with heat they dragged them out, and carried them on sticks into a small house of bark. We could hear the hot stones hissing in water, and we saw clouds of steam escaping into the cold air. We noted the performance, but we were too much occupied to enquire of its meaning, for Captain Sherwyn took up the narrative

of the events which happened after my escape from the burning house.

"I had gone abroad upon a secret mission the very day of our encounter in the tavern," he began. my return I learned of this accident of fire, and that my father had lost his life. Of my foster sister I could hear nothing, save that she had escaped and, having fled through the garden, sought refuge in the house of a humble neighbour, a widowed woman who dwelt in the mews beyond. She was known to me as an upright gentlewoman of the Quaker faith, but when I went to her house, I found the door closed. By diligent enquiry I learned that she had joined a company which was setting forth from Bristol in the ship Bounty for the Virginias, and that Beatrix had sailed with them. In addition to losing his life my father also lost his means, so with what money I could procure I set out gaily, expecting to find Beatrix well established in Boston with her new friends. When I arrived in this country. I found that the Bounty had been driven into Boston by stress of weather, and the master, not being a man of his word, compelled the company to land and so sailed away. To my amazement and grief I learned that Quakers were less tolerable in New England than Romanists, and that they were compelled to embark for the Bahamas as best they might in an unseaworthy craft. the Mary Pollock."

Whilst this relation was in progress I kept thinking of the pursuit of the Dunkirkers, of the Bounty as she tumbled past the Covenant, and Beatrix within the very sound of my voice. It was, then, no vision, but her very face which I had seen. I say again it was a bitter

moment for me. If I allowed Captain Sherwyn to pursue his design upon Boston, that would be occupation enough for him. But, could I for the sake of saving my people from the scourge of an Indian war engage him in a search for Beatrix, and find her but to lose her to myself? That was the question with which I wrestled that dark hour in the forest; but in the end God helped me to an understanding.

"Why then do you abandon this quest?" I demanded. "Why should you be turned aside from your purpose by this fantasy for revenge?"

"You also have suffered evil," he replied nobly. "If you disdain this savage weapon, why should not I?"

Then I opened up the matter of Captain Pratt and the Covenant. I told him how competent he was, that he must soon return, and that we would all engage in an adventure of enquiry until Beatrix was found. Together Captain Sherwyn and I wore away the evening, discussing this plan and that, where we should go, and what we should do. But in the end we decided merely to sit down and wait, and leave to Captain Pratt the disposition of future affairs. We were sufficiently defended against violence, and could gain tidings of the arrival of the Covenant at any of the ports, for such an event would be noised abroad instantly.

Yet I was loath to stay in idleness, for it seemed but a renegade life. I was loath to go, for never before did I so long for a human voice. Not since I was entertained in the house in Lombard Street did I feel the bonds of earthly ties so binding. But again, the suspicion that Beatrix might be alive, the thought of finding her, even if it were to lose her, the communion with

THE VINE OF SIBMAH

one who knew and loved her were sufficient cause for cheerfulness. Yet, for the first time, my heart swelled with anger against the men whose hands I had grasped, whilst they were still warm from committing this great evil.

CHAPTER XX

That night I lay in much ease, though my bed was but the boughs of the fir tree, and my house a rude habitation of bark. I had turned aside the danger from Boston. There was nothing now but to wait with such patience and comfort as I could command, until Captain Pratt should return, and in the meantime I might occupy my mind in striving to win the savages from their evil ways. This project assumed considerable proportions during the night, but it finally gave way before the assurance that Beatrix lived, and the dream that I should live to find her. So I passed the time in meditation, the moon shining fair through the labyrinth of trees, till at length sleep came.

In the windless quiet of the night I was awakened by the approach of a soft footfall. My curtain of bear's skin was raised and Captain Sherwyn entered in silence. He found me alert with a weapon in my hand, and all my faculties alive to whatever might befall.

"One of my fellows is fallen sick," he whispered in my ear. "It is a loathsome disease, and he will die before the sun-rising. Your life is in jeopardy, for the malady will be laid to your charge. Seize this bag. It contains food. Betake yourself hence. When this poor man is dead, your presence will be taken in evil part." "And what of you?" I cried in alarm. "And what of our undertaking?"

"For me I shall make the best of this ill-fortune. For our undertaking the way to fail is for you to remain here. There is a path to the westward, which will lead you to a thriving settlement on the Narragan-sett Bay. I shall join you there if I can."

Kind words passed between us, and we parted with a grasp of the hands, as when brothers part for ever. Again I went forth into the wilderness, but this time in greater despair, because Beatrix had again faded before me as a vision of the night, when morning comes.

After two days of easy travelling upon a well-trodden path, I judged that I must have come into the country of the Narragansetts, and I knew from my conversation with Captain Sherwyn that they were a bitter and hostile people. Therefore I laboured on as quickly as I could, cherishing my store of meat, and adding here and there, as I could, of nuts, and heavy-plumaged birds which I knocked with a stick from the low-hanging branches; for I was afraid of discharging my piece, lest the sound might attract some inhospitable attention.

I was pretty comfortable until the third evening, when of a sudden I was taken with an extreme rheum in the head, a fire in the joints of my back, and an unspeakable crudity of the stomach. The best I could do was to seek some suitable abode, wherein I might die; and, when I found a well-sheltered cave by the bank of a snow-fed, winter-flowing stream, I became as cheerful as a man in my condition could be.

I made a bed of boughs, and disposed my food where

it could be easily reached; and, as I was well defended from the rain which began to fall, I lay myself down to die in comfort. When my thirst became extreme, I had only to thrust out my hand, and drink from the stream which was rushing past. Day and night were as one, but in the end the fever passed, and my natural healthfulness prevailed. Truly, a temperate youth is a sovereign treasure. The skin fell from me like the bark from the plane tree, but my flesh was as firm as the flakes of a salmon.

When I was able to go abroad the spring-time had come, and white flowers were pushing their heads above the sunny banks. I took from the stream the fish which crowded the water, and from the forest what I needed for food, until my blood began to grow lively, and it flowed in my veins in a ruddy stream. So I lived in much ease, drinking of the clear water, and breathing the pure air.

One rosy morning I was taking the air, and hearing the birds sing, when I beheld four harlequins approaching my dwelling, if I may so term a commodious hole in the river's bank. In spite of my bodily weakness my inward state was such that I had little fear of these savages; and fear gave way to pity, when I perceived that they too were sorely stricken with disease. I made them a sign of greeting. They were a people of strange speech, and I made further signs that they should enter into my cave. I made for each a bed of boughs. I washed them with water from the brook, and refreshed them with the broth of a bird.

In no long time two died, but I could not proceed on my journey, until the others were restored to

health. The Indians carried with them pumpkin seeds, grains of corn for planting, and the leaf of that goodly plant tobacco, which savoury herb became to me a comfort and a stay next after the grace of God in my heart, when I had acquired an insight into its virtue. Whilst they were recovering I planted the seeds, and built a hedge round about the little garden; not that I expected to eat of the fruit, but some other wayfarer might pass by, and find food. Besides, this gentle occupation afforded the exercise which was required to bring back my accustomed vigour, and it would divert my mind in the interval which must elapse, till I should have news that Captain Pratt had returned.

By this time my savage-hearted companions had become somewhat conversable with me. They explained that a sore sickness was upon all the region, and that they, being the first afflicted, were cast out into the wilderness. I was at a loss to know their names, so I called one Simon, because he looked like a picture which I had once seen of the Cyrenian of that name. I named the other Potiphar; because I judged from his revolting appearance that, if he had a wife, she would be unfaithful to him. We dwelt together in close agreement; and, feeble as we were, commenced the construction of a house, built with poles and bark, in which the Indians displayed much ingenuity, and some industry.

Suddenly the chief of Captain Sherwyn's band came out of the forest. He had a most woeful countenance; and, as he spoke English well, he soon told us the cause of his trouble — that his tribe had melted away under the great sickness, and that Captain Sherwyn himself was stricken down. He seemed to like us well, and joined our community. I called him Nimrod, because he would spend a whole day in the laborious exercise of chasing a deer, or lie for hours on a rock with the greatest cheerfulness for the sake of spearing a fish.

I sent Simon to Providence to warn the Governor, and to solicit tidings of Captain Pratt. Here at least I was safe from the magistrates, and the king's warrant, and had only to wait on the banks of that leisurely stream until my messenger should return.

By this time the trees were full-leaved, and we had much business in hand. One evening we returned to our home, as I called it, and in an innocent and friendly manner eat together, diverting each other with the incidents of the day. We were about to make a cheerful night, when we saw a savage lurking in the forest, dodging from tree to tree, crawling on his belly like a wolf, and again standing as still as a graven image. My companions recognised him at once for an Iroquois, and with my permission bade him come near, which he did. We entertained him, and I observed that he followed the command of asking no questions, but eating what was set before him, though I have not learned that we are enjoined to eat ravenously after the manner of a wolfish beast. Then he laid himself down, and slept for a night and a day.

When the Iroquois awoke, he commenced a long and crooked discourse, chiefly by signs which I did not understand, but what he told made a great impression on my companions. Potiphar and Nimrod began to murmur. They were overcome with a spirit of

sloth, and displayed an untowardness to labour even in the matter of gathering food. They became restless, and would wander in the forest, returning at night in gloom and silence.

The Iroquois kept to himself. Now that he was rested, he would go into the woods, and come back with herbs, and barks, and parts of strange beasts, and spend whole nights brewing, and boiling, as if he were the greatest chemist in the world. Indeed, he professed a deep, and hidden, knowledge of diseases, and questioned me about things which none but a physician, or a sorcerer, might know. In addition to this, the mysterious fellow was proficient in the French tongue, which he had acquired from his teachers about the Great Lakes. At length Potiphar wiped his brow, and affected to start with surprise that his hand was wet.

"This is our usual time for going to war," he said. "Building houses in the spring-time is a foolish business. It occasions much sweating." There were more sullen days, and one morning I awoke, and found myself alone.

I reflected upon my situation. I was sitting down in idleness, neither sowing nor gathering fruit. The Covenant now seemed very far away, and her return altogether uncertain. Even if Captain Pratt had arrived in Boston, and sent me word to Providence, Simon, the messenger, might never come back with the tidings. The summer was coming, my clothing ruined, and if I stayed in the forest, I might spend eternity there. Anything was better than this exile of the spirit, and I longed for the fellowship of Christian

men. Captain Sherwyn must be dead. My heart was sick of the forest, and its strange, inconsequent people; but though I laboured hard to think, no invention of device grew up in my mind.

Though I was safe and quiet, to stay here was a misspending of my time, and I would brave all rather than remain. So I decided to follow the Indians, lead where they might; and, taking such food as I could carry, I headed westward again. It was a difficult task to overtake them, but when I came up they professed no surprise at seeing me.

"Had you no thought for me," I complained, "that you left me behind?"

"The sky is growing small, the wind is dead, the sun will grow cold," Nimrod answered.

"These are but vain imaginings. Is not the sky as big, and the sun as warm for you as for me?"

"We have come thus far to breathe. If you deign to dwell amongst our people, we will guide you safe." This was his reply, and I accepted the assurance.

We journeyed together for several days, till we came to a great river, and there we sat down. In the evening we heard sounds upon the water, and presently a canoe filled with savages was seen descending, whereat my companions shouted cheerfully. We embarked, and followed the current, till at length the smell of salt water was in my nostrils.

I cursed the savages in my heart; and, having stolen a canoe, made my way further down the stream to the open sea. When the tide was low I took possession of a dolorous island, hoping to find there some means of sending to Providence for news. If there was no word of the *Govenant*, I would adventure all which I possessed in a passage to the Bahamas, for I did not care what country should have the poor honour of absorbing my bones.

CHAPTER XXI

I FOUND a commodious cave upon this island in which to bestow what things I had, and then took my stand upon the summit. Presently I saw a sloop at some distance coming up the shore, and I made a vehement signal that it should draw near. The master changed his course, and lay-to almost beneath where I stood.

"What have you in the way of trade?" he shouted from his deck.

"Do you wish to buy or sell?" I called down from the rock.

"Either," said he.

"And what will you sell?" I asked again.

"What you seem to need most," he replied; "clothes and rum, for I see you have no lack of weapons. I have no great choice of raiment, but I can supply clothing which by reason of its beauty is unsuitable for my present employment." He fetched it from below, and holding it up to my gaze asked if I proposed to make payment in wampum, five stivers of which, he said, was equal to a penny.

"You misjudge your customer, which is never the mark of a good trader," said I with assurance.

"Then I shall take gold," the master answered, more amused.

"You shall have your price and your medium," I said; and to his surprise I pulled out a broad yellow

piece. Then I perceived the truth of that Scripture which says: "money answereth all things."

"With metal like this," cried the skipper, "you have no cause to flutter about these rocks like a speckled bird."

"Here at least," I answered him, "I dwell in quietness and safety."

He worked the sloop closer in, and leaving one of his four men in charge, he scrambled up the rocks. I greeted him warmly, and I knew by his speech that he was a sober man.

"Where do you sail from?" I asked.

"From Providence."

"Have you a knowledge of the shipping along this coast?"

"I know, as I know the palm of my hand, every ship which sails these waters."

"Then you know the Covenant?"

"Do I know the Covenant?" he cried. "Could I forget the Covenant, when I laboured at her building; and every rope and sail of this pretty sloop was given to me by Captain Pratt?"

"Captain Pratt," said I, "is my friend. Half my means and all my hope are in the *Covenant*. If you can give me tidings of her, it will be the best deed which you ever performed in your life."

"It is strange that any friend of Captain Pratt should be reduced to this poor estate," he said enquiringly.

"I chose to remain behind in Boston," I told him.

"I think I understand. I live in Providence myself. Our own Governor once elected to dwell in the wilderness."

"And do you hear anything touching the king's officers?" I enquired in a casual way.

"Ah!" said he with meaning, and lifting his cap with respect, "suppose we leave it at that. My name is Elkana Pardridge. My sloop is the *Ripple*, and we are both yours to command, besides the four stout fellows whom you see upon her deck."

"Is it safe to sail into the Bay of Providence?" I asked in joy.

"It is safe to sail where you like," said Elkana Pardridge, "so long as you leave me a fathom of water below the Ripple's keel."

"Conduct me then, I pray you, to the Governor's house, for there I hope to have the earliest news of Captain Pratt."

"That I will, and as his house stands by the sea, I shall put you ashore in the Governor's front garden."

So I boarded the little ship, which was off in an instant, and sped over the waves as if she were the eldest daughter of the Covenant. As the sun was setting we sailed up Narragansett Bay in the golden light, and cast anchor in front of the Governor's house which we could see as a well-lighted bower deep amongst the trees. Elkana Pardridge rowed ashore with me, and together we entered the grounds which were part forest and part lawn. As we advanced towards the light, we saw an old man walking about taking the air of the summer night. My companion recognised him at once for Governor Rogers, and turning aside presented me to this notable man.

"Captain Dexter," said he, "there are two besides myself who will rejoice at your coming. Your arrival

is most opportune, for within these few days I have word of that stalwart seaman, Phineas Pratt, that he is refitting the *Covenant* at Salem, and may be expected shortly in these waters."

"This is great news indeed, and I believe from my knowledge of Captain Pratt, that I shall not long be a burden upon my friends."

"Your presence will be no burden," said the Governor, lifting his hand in protest. "Indeed, I have been all alive to hear of your coming, since your messenger gave me such a large account of your kindness to him and his companions in the forest."

"I am glad that Simon has not failed me, for I have been obliged to contract my regard for the fidelity of his kind."

"You call him Simon; I had rather name him Onesimus, for he was a faithful slave, and with great cheerfulness lay silently in the shadow of these trees for a month. When this news came, I despatched him at once upon the errand which now you have performed for yourself." A sound of youthful laughter floated out on the still air.

"Come within," said the Governor, "and see what this mirth may mean."

"Before I accept your offer, I must mention that I am an outcast from the churches on the Bay."

"I like you none the worse for that. I myself was ever an upholder of the freedom of speech."

"I must also give warning that, in comforting me, you run counter to the wishes of the king."

"Even if you were of the proscribed, you would be none the less welcome," cried Mr. Rogers in a precipitant

way. Then turning to Elkana Pardridge, he also invited him within, but the master of the *Ripple* excused himself, and protested that he would remain on board.

"For," said he, "I have promised Captain Dexter to answer for his security wherever there is six feet of water beneath my keel." Turning about he made his way toward the beach, but looking back he cried to me out of the dark: "My sails are always set; do you but clap your palms together on the shore, then catch us who can!"

The Governor led me up his broad steps to the low vine-covered gallery, and there in the shadow, half reclining on a couch, was Captain Sherwyn whom I left in the forest to die. He would have leaped to his feet, but his languor prevented it, so I bended low, and almost touched his face with mine.

"I mourned you as lost," I said. "Your escape and this meeting are a great joy."

Captain Sherwyn smiled, and, turning his head, called in a soft voice: "Agatha, my sweetling, come into the light and let Captain Dexter have a sight of you."

Then from the shadow of the leaves, she came out, and stood in the full light that shone through the window. The Governor stepped forward, and presented her to me as his niece. I took her hand, and as I beheld her tall, firm form, and looked into her clear, shining hazel eyes, and saw the blue veins beneath the white skin, my heart beat sharp, and a blindness came into my brain; for there arose to my vision the countenance, pensive, pure, stedfast and devout, of Beatrix



THE GOVERNOR'S NIECE

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Sherwyn. For one instant I thought it was she: but it was not. The remembrance left me so confused I could not find words to answer her warm greeting:

"Any friend of Captain Sherwyn is welcome here."

The Governor turned and, leaving us, went into his house, whilst his niece sat down by my side; and in the darkness I believe she took Captain Sherwyn's hand in hers.

"I am all alive to know what this means," I said.

"I do not know myself," he answered, "save that I am happy, and have no mind for any other thing."

"But how did you find your way into this haven of rest?" I cried.

"That I can hardly tell, either. I only know that I was carried here by a band of friendly Indians who found me wandering in the forest after the sickness had passed." Agatha nestled closer to him.

"His life was saved because I asked it; and now it is given to me," she said, with a sweet expression on her young face.

"True," Captain Sherwyn agreed, "I am no more my own; my life has been purchased by her care; now it is hers; and all I ask in further return is her love, of which I have ample promise."

I had sense enough to keep back my questionings of Beatrix, though I was aflame to know how Captain Sherwyn could have any thought in the world but for her. He must have divined what was in my mind.

"Agatha knows it all," he broke out of a sudden, "the reason for my coming to New England, so you need have no care for your words. When I met you, I thought that I knew what love was; but I did not.

Now, with this new light, I know it is you whom Beatrix loves, and that you are the one who loves her."

"This is as true as a revelation from heaven," I cried; "at least that part of it which declares that I do love Beatrix."

"And equally it is certain that she loves you," Agatha murmured. "I know the heart of a woman. Yet," she went on in a gayer tone, "I have promised your friend that I shall not marry him until Beatrix is found, or until she is lost." Her voice had sunk to a whisper.

"Then," said I in a voice full of new confidence, "I shall make your promise easy to redeem; for I shall find Beatrix, and marry her too."

"And I will help you," Captain Sherwyn added.
"Beatrix shall still be a sister to me."

The summer night was heavy with the smell of flowers, and vibrant with life. We sat together in silence, each heart filled with its own fancies, when there burst upon our startled ears the beat of galloping hoofs. Before we could collect our thoughts there was a clatter on the gravel, and two horses drew up in front of the Governor's door.

"'Way for the king's messenger!" cried the leader, as they leaped to the ground. Springing up the steps he made the house ring with the clanging of the knocker, whilst his companion held the tired horses not a dozen yards away.

We were sitting in the friendly shelter of the darkness and the overhanging vines, so we were safe to hear what was wanted by the messengers of the king. Through the open window I could see the Governor start from his writing. He took a candle in his hand and unfastened the door. The stranger entered unbidden. As he came within my view again, he took a paper from his breast, and laid it upon the table.

"May it please your honour," he cried in a peremptory tone, "I have the king's warrant to search these territories for the enemies of him, and of his late father of blessed memory?"

"I know of none such in this settlement," said the Governor kindly. "Whom do you seek?"

"I have information that several lie concealed hereabouts, but prefer not to disclose their names."

"What then do you wish of me?" the Governor asked calmly.

"I ask your warrant to make private search of all the houses where they may lie concealed."

"That is a grave matter," answered the Governor, who by this time had finished his reading of the papers, "and more, I think, than I am warranted in granting without due discussion."

"Are you willing to fail in your duty to your king?" the messenger demanded with a threat which he was at no pains to conceal.

"I am thinking now of my duty to the people, and my own conscience," said the Governor with a resolution which could not be mistaken. "I have sworn to administer the laws of this colony according to such understanding as is granted to me under the divine Providence, and I do not propose to go beyond that guide."

"Do you then refuse the king's request?" cried the stranger.

"I say neither the one thing nor the other," the Governor answered, "till I take further counsel in the morning."

"But the delay interferes with my plan," the messenger exclaimed.

"I know nothing of your plans, nor do I care, excepting that you shall proceed in an orderly way. I do not even know your name, nor do I desire to know, for I intend to proceed on my own motion."

"My name is Captain Kirke."

"Captain Kirke," said Sherwyn in a whisper, dragging himself to his feet. "Do you remember the man with whom you fought in the London tavern when first we met?"

"Why did I not run him through with the sword? It is the very same."

"You may have occasion now to finish the quarrel, if his truculency continue." Captain Sherwyn was on his feet, and made his way into the room, where the Governor and his visitor were now at high words.

"Kirke," he cried, "you say you are the king's officer. Is it by abusing his magistrates you think to earn his good-will?" The stranger turned about and with much respect stretched forth his hand.

"This is a lucky meeting," he shouted gaily. "I call you to witness this old man's obstinacy. I am informed in Boston that Nicholas Dexter, one of the proscribed, inhabits within this jurisdiction, and I am refused a warrant of search." Captain Sherwyn disdained the proffered hand.

"Would you like to see this Nicholas Dexter face to face?" he asked playfully. With this, Agatha who

was sitting very close to me arose and going down the steps, accosted the man who held the horses.

"Do but let me assist you," she said, and disengaging the hand which held Kirke's beast, she stroked the animal's head, and called him pretty names.

"Captain Dexter," I heard Sherwyn call from within the house. I arose, and advancing to the door, I met Kirke as he was coming out, followed close by the Governor and Captain Sherwyn. The stranger put his hand to his sword.

"I give my prisoner over to your charge," cried Sherwyn; "but have a care, Kirke. Do you not remember your encounter at the Swan with Two Necks, where Captain Dexter would have gutted you like a herring, had I not prevented it?"

"He shall not escape me this time," cried Kirke in a fury.

"If he does, I shall hold you responsible to the king."

I came so close I crowded Kirke back against the door, which Sherwyn had discreetly closed, and I noted that neither the Governor nor he stood aside to let this marauder exercise his weapon.

"I am unarmed," said I, "and if you draw I shall murder you with my hands." Captain Sherwyn pressed nearer, and entirely obstructed Kirke's arm.

There was a faint scream behind me from Agatha, and I knew that the man was coming to his leader's rescue. If I turned round, Kirke would have me in the back, so I dealt him a blow full in the face. It stunned, and blinded, him. As I wheeled, I saw his companion below me with his foot upon the first step.

I leaped from the balcony, the man's shoulders affording a comfortable stepping-stone to the horse which Agatha was holding. I seized the bridle-rein, and shouting an ambiguous farewell, went leaping down the slope to the water's edge. I plunged in, horse and all; till, what with floundering and what with swimming, I soon came to where the *Ripple* lay. The crew heard the commotion, and peered into the darkness. As they caught sight of the strange spectacle, one cried aloud: "Here is a sea-monster, or a devil;" but I answered in my own voice, and Elkana Pardridge himself soon gave me a friendly hand on board.

CHAPTER XXII

THE Ripple was under weigh before I had blinked the water from my eyes. I was wet, but the night was warm, and I suffered no inconvenience. With every sail drawing to the night breeze we headed down the bay to the open sea. As we rounded the head of land, the lights of Providence were shut out, and I was safe once more on the great deep.

"We shall lie off and on till the morning," said the master of the sloop. "Then we may spend the time in making an adventure of the codfish, until we gain tidings of the Covenant."

"Is there no way of sending a word to Captain Pratt,"
I asked.

"Let us leave the matter to him," the seaman replied. "He will surely come to Providence in search of you. This Bay has some repute as a harbour of safety."

The wind was blowing strong on the shore, and we beat out into the open to have more sea room. When we were well clear of the land, as we judged, the change which came over the elements led me to fear some dismal accident; for I had gained some knowledge of the weather from my sagacious companions in the forest. The master also began to regard the sky which was now filled with omens of evil not to be mistaken.

There were great shocks in the air, and blazes of light which only revealed the darkness. Then the winds were loosed.

All that night we tumbled and tossed. When the day broke we could see, away to the North, as it were a curtain of lead, which had been let down from the heavens, and every cloud in the sky was scudding to get behind it.

The land had vanished we knew not where, and we cast an eager eye over the waste of water to see if any were in a like evil case with ourselves. At a great distance, whether in the sea or in the sky, we could scarcely tell, was a ship worthy of such a sea. It required no skill to fall near. We had only to make the helm fast, and let her drive. At first I was afraid it was a figment of the imagination, that lonely ship. But it was not. It was the *Covenant*, and soon Captain Pratt's voice was roaring in my ears, as we sped astern.

"What do you here?" he thundered through his trumpet, "in a place fit only for the master fiend of the pit."

The winds swallowed up my reply, and the flying spray cut off the view as we shot under the *Covenant's* leaping counter. At times the mists were rent apart, and a rag of sail would fill up the gap. But, as the wind fell we could hear the banging of the canvas in the distance, and knew that we were not deserted.

At last the torn and streaming rain clouds fied. The sea fell back to rest, and we were able to come alongside the ship which I knew so well, and to see leaning over the rail Captain Pratt, and many of the

stout fellows with whom I had crossed the deep. The sloop was moored astern, and we were drawn up to the *Covenant's* deck, where it was good again to be. There was such a struggle of words in our mouths we could scarce give them utterance; but soon they came in a flood, asking and answering, explaining and expressing surprise.

Elkana Pardridge and his crew surveyed their surroundings under the guidance of Hugh Cornish; and they liked so well what they saw that two of them contracted to remain. After being kindly entertained, the master and his men were dismissed with a present of sails and cordage. I offered them a piece of gold, for their competent care of me, but the honest fellows declined the gift.

"Men who love freedom can well afford to render so small a service for naught," the master of the sloop protested handsomely. As they went over the side the clouds broke, and the light streamed over the sea.

"Take the height of the sun," said Captain Pratt to the pilot; and to the boy: "Fetch a jug of rum."

When the sloop cast off, the Covenant was given her head; and as the wind served, we were soon speeding southward. Captain Pratt cast a look aloft, and everything pleased him well; the topsails neat in their gaskets, for the wind was blowing fresh, and the spars were tall; the lower sails flat, and drawing tight as a fiddle string on every point and leach. He looked along the poop, and the pilot was at his task; forward, and the crew were ranged by the bulwarks, enjoying the warmth of the sun after the wet tempestuous night.

"Come within," he said, and placed his arm in mine.

We entered the cabin. Nothing was changed since the day I first set foot in the *Covenant*, a fugitive from my own land.

"Whither is God conducting you now?" he enquired, as we sat to the table with the conveniences which the healthy boy had brought.

"Whither — I care not. I am a traitor, and you are a pirate, if we can believe what is written in the king's warrant." Captain Pratt laughed a lean, joyless laugh.

"I have heard something of this charge," he said.
"I do not affirm that this warrant writer was practising the trade of a slanderer. Yet, I love my enemies well enough to afford them sure grounds of procedure. Proof will not be lacking, when I have done."

"The door of New England is closed behind me, and I must now join in your adventures, whether I would or not."

"I need not ask the cause," he assured me, "why I found you in this desolate region of the sea."

"You told me that it would come."

"But I did not think it would come so soon."

"My belief did not agree with theirs, nor my practice with their doctrines."

"I heard something of this, also, but did not choose to enquire closely, as I feared a brawl. I am not yet ready to lose the shelter of those convenient ports."

"Whilst it lasted, it was painful: but I think something has been done towards freedom, and reasonable living. We are together again; and I misjudge the signs, if they do not proclaim that our help will soon be welcome to those communities."

"That is as it may be," he assured me. "To them

my life is godless, and reprobate. That they can endure, so long as I do not meddle with their doctrines. The form of unrighteousness which they have imputed to you is harder for them to forgive."

"What have they done with my little home?" I asked. "I had a liking for it."

"I made a formal visit to your house in company with a boat's crew, and a comfortable one it is. I gave it into the care of the magistrates. Indeed, I committed it to their charge with some plainness, and informed them that I should require every stick and timber at their hands."

"I trust," said I, "that one day I shall be free to return to that humble abode."

"You have a strange persistency of desire towards this commonwealth which served you so ill. I sacrificed much," he assured me handsomely, "in yielding to your design of bringing harmony into a discordant community. Had you been with me, I believe that, ere this, I should have accomplished my desire against the Spaniard, instead of being compelled to battle back to port through these tumultuous seas." His mind was elsewhere. His voice was rising, and his eyes glowed like dull-red coals. The spirit of hatred had broken out afresh.

"Tell me, I pray you, of your exploits since we parted; for you must have had many trials of patience and courage." I hoped to wean him away from his fantasy by a sober relation of facts, but it fell out otherwise. Yet he was disposed to open his mind, and he made a long recital of the adventures of the Covenant during the long winter whilst we dwelt apart.

The first portion of the narrative which he made dealt with events which I had rather omit, in view of the warrant for his arrest upon a charge of piracy, and because certain deeds do not look well at this distance of time. I have also removed many expressions, which, however pertinent at the time, when taken from their setting, might now be a ground of offence.

"You will remember," he said, continuing the narrative, "how I proposed to you the searching for treasure, and how I betook myself to the sea with that end in view. For nearly half a year I was far from improving the temporal state of my crew, or reimbursing myself for all I had adventured of your money and my own. Then I got advice of a treasure-ship which was wrecked upon the Bahamas, and I had a strong impression that I should be the discoverer of it."

"This is great intelligence for me," I assured him; "for my store of gold is much impaired by my efforts in the public service."

"At the same time," he continued without heeding my enthusiasm for gain, "there arose an occasion for effecting something in furtherance of my main design against the Spaniard. Some of my fellows then complained of my delay in going upon the adventure of the wreck, and manifested an excess in diet, and apparel. On one occasion, when we had gone ashore in a friendly port, several were seduced by perverse counsel. They became merry, and wanton; and I was confirmed in the view that they were no men for an adventure of danger, that when the push came they would break like a reed in my hand. As you observed when first you came into the *Covenant*, some of my crew

were a set of rude, mechanical fellows, the other part swift to obey, and slow of speech; but I found occasion to separate the sheep from the goats."

I was eager to know of the accomplishment of this drastic measure; but Captain Pratt only replied, that the love of money was the root of much evil, and my curiosity had to go unsatisfied.

"However," he added, after a pause for reflection, "I was in bad shape, short of hands, and of many other things, and had to return to New England. But now we have a sound deck beneath our feet, a stout crew at our back, men of probity, well seasoned, and a wide sea to the leeward. You have saved me the labour of going into the Bay of Providence, so here we are off to the Southern Seas on the business of the treasure-ship, and then for the Spaniard again."

At this moment Hugh Cornish came in to say that he had made a survey of the ship, and that parts of the planking had started in the night, by reason of the violence of the storm. Captain Pratt arose, and together they went down into the ship to repair the damage which had been wrought. I was left alone and had occasion to reflect upon many things.

When I lay in the forest, and again when I went forth from the Bay to find the *Covenant*, I was all aflame to acquaint Captain Pratt with what I knew, to tell him of the meeting with Captain Sherwyn in the forest, and again in Governor Rogers's house, to persuade him that Beatrix might be alive, and that I should find her. But now, upon the wide sea, my ardour fled, and I could scarcely believe the great intelligence which I had received.

True, Beatrix had been deported to the Bahamas in the Mary Pollock, as Captain Sherwyn had informed me; but the ship was unseaworthy, and may have foundered. Captain Pratt was all for the treasure-ship and the Spaniard. He would not in his present temper be moved by any words of mine. If I were so bereft of reason as to think that there was any high degree of probability that the most thorough search we could make of those large islands would yield any result, there was little likelihood that Captain Pratt would engage in so doubtful an enterprise, even if Beatrix were the daughter of his admiral. In truth, I was sick at heart, and only craved for quiet.

In any case there was no need for instant speech, since we were bound for the Bahamas, and the *Covenant* would be a rover in many seas. Yet the lowness of spirits which succeeded to the elation I had felt, when I came leaping from Governor Rogers's house, remained with me long.

I sought the deck where there was company; but I was the more alone. I retired within myself, and as we sped ever southward, even Hugh Cornish failed to arouse me to an interest in the new scenes which I was witnessing, or in his account of the doings of the Covenant, during the preceding winter.

CHAPTER XXIII

We continued to enjoy good summer weather, with a few flaws of wind, and a level sea on which we sailed comfortably. The days passed, I knew not how, nor how many, till at length Captain Pratt aroused himself to cheerfulness.

"Now," he cried, "it is time to proceed upon the business of this treasure-ship, and see what it will yield to recompense us for our toil."

So the pilot made several observations with the crossstaff, and concluded by setting a new course. After three days we sighted the end of the Bahamas, and presently had a sweet smell of the earth, and of plants and shrubs. Some eight leagues to the eastward we anchored in a sandy bay, and sent our boats ashore with the desire to speak with the Indians, to see whether or not they were well disposed. They came forth in the water, the most brutish of all I had ever seen, and except it were in form and speech, they seemed void of all that pertains to reasonable men. Certainly they were expert swimmers, and could dive, and abide under the water, swallowing of the sea, as if it were a fresh river, after the manner of spaniels or mermaidens. Here, having some conference, we fell to quarrelling with them, whereby several were killed. Yet, we procured a few.

tall, well-moulded fellows to row the boats, as we took knowledge of the coast; for the locality of the wreck was known only to Captain Pratt, and that by certain landmarks.

Having refreshed ourselves well for what little time we stayed, we set sail, and drove along the coast. The wind was rising, and the *Covenant* was threading her way in a maze of islands, and tortuous channels, in a manner wonderful to see; for her commander knew them as well as a worm knows the labyrinths of the cheese wherein he has passed his life.

Even the ship's boats were at last too cumbersome for threading the intricate channels, so we made several canoes of cottonwood trees, on which I learned to employ my own hand and adze, and by lying abroad risked much contagion from the stench and vapours which arose in the forest. The ship's boats would lie at anchor in a convenient place, while the canoes would busk to and fro, but they could discover nothing except reefs rising within two or three feet of the surface, so that a ship striking upon them would sink, who can say how many fathoms, into the ocean.

At last one of our fellows looking over the side into the clear water discovered a clump of sea feathers growing, as he thought, from a rock. He was contracted to a virtuous gentlewoman of Roxbury, and thinking to obtain something for her adornment, bade one of the tawnies dive for it. This he did with great promptness, and came up with a large relation of the things which he had seen, namely great guns, and huge beams of wood. The Indian dived again, and this time by means of a rope he brought up a sow of silver weighing several

pounds. I happened to be in command of this crew, and prudently buoyed the spot, till I should have further advice. Bidding my fellows make no mention of what they had seen, I returned with them to the *Covenant*.

It was the hour of the evening meal, and Captain Pratt was seated at the table in his cabin. I ordered the steward secretly to place the lump of silver under cover upon a suitable dish beside the hot, salt beef, and brown bread.

"What new device is this?" he enquired of the steward, as the strange dish caught his eye.

"Surely," said I, "we have need of some delicacy for the appeasement of our appetite."

"But what is it? Whence comes it? Thanks be to God, we are made!" he cried, as he lifted the cover.

The great news spread throughout the ship; and when we came upon the deck one of the seamen who had come from Concord was improving the occasion by handling the sin of covetousness. He warned his fellows lest this discovery might provoke them to the pleasures of the flesh, and foster a lewd life, and corrupt behaviour.

Next morning there was no need for a cock to crow for our awakening, even if there had been such a beast on board. Anxiety to see the issue of the business was enough to make us stir early. We easily found the spot, and the Indians, by means of a diving-bell which Captain Pratt had invented, came upon that room in the wreck where the bullion had been stored. We prospered so much in this new fishery that in one day, without the loss of any man's life, we took a pretty store of treasure. I observed that there was grown upon the plate a crust like limestone to the thickness of several

inches, which being broken by irons, contrived for that purpose, we knocked out whole bushels of pieces-of-eight.

We surveyed our spoil and found it was no small store; swords of Almain blades, the hilts and scabbards set with precious stones; poniards and other cutting weapons, worthless through rust for offence or protection; rich glasses; vases for wine, all set with gems; drinking cups made of one jewel; chains of pearls, and of other rich stones; all sorts of plate, such as cups, basins with covers, pots, and beakers of silver, skilfully wrought; of rough diamonds an infinite number, and all sorts of coral and topazes and rubies. Of silver alone there was many a hundredweight, and wedges of gold, nine inches long, and five inches wide.

The company was entitled to one-third of the gold; but, on account of the difficulty in dividing the bars, it was resolved, and agreed, that the things of price, as gold and silver, should be put into a chest with large keys, whereof Captain Pratt and I should have one each, and Hugh Cornish the third.

"For it is grounded on God's law and true justice," said Captain Pratt, as he addressed the crew, "to distribute to every one that which belongs to him of right, and that in due season, which shall be done when we are come again into our own country."

When this matter was ended we found the island a convenient place to avoid those distempers which breed in a long voyage. We encamped ourselves, whilst some went a-hunting, some a-fowling, and some a-fishing, whereby we got great store of game, and were ravished to see the stately cottonwood and other trees, as if they

were set by art, as they are in the Low Countries, and the woods filled with sweet smells.

Our necessary business being ended we set sail again with our rich cargo. We had treasure enough, and I was now determined to make the attempt to turn Captain Pratt aside from his senseless design against the Spaniard. The moment was ill-chosen for his temper was rising with the wind.

"I have a thing to say," I began in a quiet way.

"And I have a thing to show you," he broke in; "and unless your thought agrees with mine, you had best hold your speech."

"It is a thing very close to my heart," I said.

"Do not add to my burden," he urged in a beseeching way. "Give me but a day or two, and then you may have the *Covenant* and all my treasure for yourself." He turned and betook himself to his cabin, so I went to Hugh Cornish for refuge.

"Patience," he pleaded softly, "we are near the end. This ranging over the sea is as little to my liking as it is to yours; but we are now made men, and soon can go where we like, and live a life of ease."

When this companion of my youth mentioned a life of ease, it came to me with new force that there would be no ease of heart for me, till the long journey was over. The thing was so strong upon me that I told him of my meeting with the Alderman's son in the forest, and the tidings which I had from him that Beatrix had once sailed upon these very seas.

"Patience," he repeated. "Patience, and all shall be well."

Captain Pratt at last came out from his retreat, his

face haggard as I had not yet seen it. He talked with the pilot, and then came to me with a subdued manner.

"You remember the matter of the mutineers?" he said. "I have somewhere near this place a school of discipline; then I will listen to you."

So we went poking, and prowling, till we found the spot, a secure sandy bay. The anchor had not grasped the bottom, before certain savage-looking fellows, to the number of half-a-dozen, came running down the beach. I recognised them as part of the Covenant's crew, though they were browned by the rust of the sea and the blaze of the sun.

"These," said Captain Pratt to me, "are my scholars, whom I am reducing to obedience."

"Have you learned your lesson?" cried he in a cheerful voice to the foremost who came leaping into the water with manifest pleasure.

"We have learned it by rote," the man answered with good will.

"It is a fine thing," said Captain Pratt, "to be removed from temptation for a space. Fasting, even without prayer, is a great moderator of the desires."

"We have no desire but to do our duty," the man replied.

"We shall see how well you have performed the task which was assigned to you," Captain Pratt was cautious to remark.

We went ashore and proceeded to view the work which these exiles had performed; and there we found smithies, and all the implements of ship-building. Out of the fine timber which they had cut down, they had constructed the strangest craft which I had ever seen.

I asked its purpose of my companion, but got nothing in reply save a bitter jest or a dry laugh which might mean one thing or the other. It was a long, flat vessel. with two masts, and all exposed above the single deck. At the stern was a chamber shaped on the outside like a cradle, from which you had a good view within and without. There was a long bench running the whole length of the vessel; but most of all Captain Pratt was pleased with the interior. He showed me the rooms. whose names he had fluently, the Gavor, the Scandlat, the Campaign, the Paillot, the Tavern, the Fore-room. There was another room which he called the Tanlar, and you gained entrance thereto by a scuttle two feet square, but other source of air or light there was none. The whole fabric reminded me of nothing but the accursed craft in which, by Alderman Sherwyn's account, Beatrix with her young eyes had last seen her father in the Bay of Gibraltar.

The vessel was not launched, but lay concealed against the time of need, as I supposed. Captain Pratt ordered that a quantity of goods should be bestowed within; shirts of the coarsest canvas; jerkins of red serge slit on each side up to the arm holes, with open sleeves reaching to the elbow; small caps, and coarse frocks. For sleeping I could see no provision beyond boards a foot and a half wide. Food also was put in, peas which had become musty, and a little wine. It was in no sense a comfortable entertainment, and I said as much to Captain Pratt.

"Yet," he mused, "I knew a man who subsisted upon it for near seven years."

I was keen for knowledge. If through fault of his,

his admiral had come to the galleys, and had seen his daughter from his accursed bench, then I could understand the passion of Captain Pratt. But I was compelled to leave my curiosity unsatisfied, for I heard him going over the whole rosary of his oaths, and muttering: "Vengeance is mine: I will repay!"

CHAPTER XXIV

Our necessary business being ended, we proposed next morning to set sail from this quiet retreat. Our crew was enriched by the addition of the sobered mutineers, and I felt that something was afoot. As the sun was going down, a ship was descried in the offing, some three leagues to seaward. Captain Pratt condescended to give chase. We began to weigh anchor, and being apeak ready to sail, one from the top gave warning that an armado was coming about the cape. It was too late to withdraw. We heaved up the anchor, and stood out to sea with all sails set, hoping to have their weather gauge, or at worst an abundance of room for ordering our movements.

"Now," cried Captain Pratt to me as we stood upon the poop, "these are no Dunkirkers. I take shame that I have as yet procured you no experience, but I shall not long be chargeable with that sin. We are now about our proper business, a well-seasoned ship beneath our feet, filled with men of valour, and all brought up in the business of the sea. The wind is large, the water smooth, and you shall see such combustions as John never witnessed from the isle of Patmos."

The armado held its course. But presently, the wind scanting with us, and larging with them, we were forced to the leeward, threshing our way to a commodious

place for the dispute which was like to ensue. I made bold to ask Captain Pratt's opinion of the struggle. He professed no disdain of the Spaniard; but I took comfort in his knowledge of their manner when they fight by sea.

"First," he explained, "their language is a hindrance, and not suited for the purpose of commanding a ship. They have no perception of the essence of the sea, but conduct their sea fights after the manner of a battle Their gunners are exempt from all labour and care, except about their artillery. Their soldiers watch and ward, as if they were on shore, and have no other business save to clean their arms, in which they The sailors are slaves, few and are not over curious. bad, and not suffered to harbour themselves under decks. but must sleep void of cover. Over each division is a captain, but the captain of the soldiers is captain of If they come to fight they order themselves in vanguard, rearguard, main-battle, and wings, counting the forecastle the vanguard of the company, the abaftmast the rearguard, and the waist the main-battle. It is in the waist they place their principal force, and when their placa de armas is taken, all hope is lost. That is where our blow shall fall."

The night fell. The Covenant held her way through the darkness. We left nothing undone, for it was hard to say what the morning might reveal in respect of our position, and the number of the enemy. The disposition of the ordnance was altered to meet our great need. The jowlers and bases were raised to the cage, and murderers placed in the cobridge head, where their speedy charging and discharging would be of great moment.

The culverins were loaded full up to the weight prescribed by art and experience, and the muskets were supplied with two calever shot apiece.

In the morning the armado was in full view upon the open sea. It was composed of a galizabra, with the admiral on board, a galleon in charge of the vice-admiral, and a brigantine. We perceived at once that they had double the ordnance of the *Covenant*, and ten to one of men. The admiral himself was as long, or rather longer, than our ship, but lightly built, deep waisted, and without defences. The other two were craft of a somewhat lesser size, but defended and armed fearfully. They did not disdain to fight. It was the plot of the admiral to bring himself upon our weather bow, and so fall aboard of us upon our broadside, and that the vice-admiral should lay his admiral aboard; and, entering his men into him, they should both do to us as occasion would offer.

We allowed the admiral to weather us as he designed, and he came booming along, his flag in the main top, and all his sails gallantly spread abroad. Being within musket shot, we hailed with noise of our trumpets; and as he came upon our quarter, what with our pieces, and what with our fireworks, we cleared his decks so that scarce a person appeared. Then, having tried his temper, and choosing to order as would seem best to us, we drew off unscathed to leeward, making all the speed we required.

This manœuvre of flight afforded time to complete our dispositions according to the information which we had received in the first encounter, and we were now in the best order to fight or defend ourselves. About eleven of the clock the wind began to blow, and we continued standing off into the sea, the Spaniard again cheek by jowl with us, ever getting to the windward, since the shipping of the South Sea is moulded sharp under water, and long. As the sun mounted aloft the wind began to freshen and caused a rolling, chopping sea. I looked that the pilot should strive for a windward position, but in this I was mistaken, for Captain Pratt adjured him to lay as he was.

The Spaniards now bore a taut sail to fetch further up aweather us, which they did, but when they came to use their long artillery, they could not, but lay shaking in the wind, by reason of the heaving of the sea.

Upon the instant the Covenant was about on the other tack, and heading for the admiral. As we approached the Spaniard, we discharged the guns on the port side, and then, going about, fired two guns from the poop. When we came about, six guns were discharged as one, whereby his mizzen was cut away, and fell into the sea. We now sheered off, and opened fire again when I observed that two hearty negroes, and two sailors, who were on the poop hauling aft the sheet, were cut in two near the bitts. This discharge was followed up by another so quickly that the Spaniard was hard pressed.

Then came to his relief the vice-admiral with the design to run us down, which Captain Pratt seemed to encourage. But at the moment when I looked for a fearful concussion, the *Covenant* turned upon her heel, and as the Spaniard tumbled past Hugh Cornish of his own motion gave him four guns, shooting away the main mast and killing near fourteen men. As the vice-admiral passed under our quarter, Captain Pratt seized



THE SPANIARD

a rope; and, making a bowline knot, cast it over her standard, and carried away that emblem, which was the cause of much satisfaction to us.

The third ship which was the brigantine now came down upon us, but we replied with so terrible a discharge with guns and muskets, that one ball shot away the figurehead, and another entered the dead wood, and passed through on the other side. Yet, he came alongside as if he would have wrought some stratagem upon us, so we hurled two harpoons into his sails, and several inboard, which killed the condestable and two sailors.

The pilot laid the *Covenant* alongside. Then stood up Phineas Pratt, and I was by his side. So likewise stood up from behind our bulwarks, comely sailors to the number of twenty, and every man took him to his weapon. Now sounded the trumpet, and all tumbled aboard the Spaniard.

"Spit upon your hands, and thrust from the shoulder," was all the advice which Captain Pratt volunteered, as he headed the charge. Abandoning all seemliness of demeanour, he applied to the master of the Spaniards opprobrious epithets, and most injurious language. That one opposed at the front with sword and target, but our leader smote him so main a blow that his head clave asunder, and he fell stark dead beneath our feet.

My own quality is in strength, not in quickness; yet no stroke was wasted. Christopher Lea and Richard Thorpe were at our shoulders, performing much manhood. By sheer weight and strength we forced the enemy over the break of the poop, and the confusion was such that Hugh Cornish could find no place to plant a shot. We gained the cabin beneath the poop, where

there was no time misspent, no man idle, nor any man's labour ill-bestowed. The Spaniards wrought in a vain cause.

The admiral held his fire till we had regained the Covenant's deck, and then he was not guilty of laxity. But we were fleeing down the wind, and had time to reckon our loss—five killed and left behind, seven wounded, and four burnt or scorched. Captain Pratt himself had a thrust near the armpit, not perilous, though it perished the muscle, and severed a sinew.

Leaving his consort ahull, the admiral fell down upon us. It was now a question which should yield; but we continued to play upon him, and strove by all means possible to shoot down his masts and yards, to tear his tackling and sails. We resorted to the device of using heavy billets of wood fitted to the ordnance, arrows of fire shot out of cross bows, and cases of small shot joined two-and-two with pieces of wire. Presently, and none too soon, we observed a flag of truce flying in place of his ensign. We parled, and incited him to surrender, which he consented to do en buena guerra.

The long day was far spent, and we agreed to make answer in the morning. We drew off to confer amongst ourselves, to see if we were in condition to refuse him terms. So gentle an ending was little to the liking of Captain Pratt, and he summoned his company to a conference.

"Now have we in part accomplished our desire upon our professed enemies," he began; "though we lie wounded and gasping for breath. First I ask the carpenter to survey the ship, and report in what condition we are for going through with the matter."

Edward Tarbor, a skilful wright, went about his task, and we took some refreshment until he had finished his inspection.

"The Covenant," he reported, "is sore stricken, bruised, and ready to sink. Her sails are torn, the main mast perished, two pumps shot to pieces, seven shot under water, and five or six feet of water in the hold."

Grief and rage gave force to Captain Pratt's reply. The fire burst forth from his heart, and he all but broke into tears: "I am pierced to my soul to hear of this condition when our foes are all but delivered into our hands."

"Several of our company are slain," spoke up the seaman from Concord, "and others are sore hurt. I counsel that we be content." This moderate view was well received, and Captain Pratt was civil enough to seek my advice.

"I have no great knowledge of warfare by sea," I protested. "It mislikes me to lose what we have sweat for, but adventure must be tempered with prudence." My caution angered Captain Pratt afresh.

"Is our cause unjust?" he broke forth. "Is the honour of our country to lie for ever in the dust? Are we content to see our blood spilt before our eyes? Have we forgotten their faith violated, their promises broken, the heat of their fires, the chains of their galleys? Left we our pleasant land with all its contentments, to be baffled by white rags? Have we forgotten the old and ancient worthiness of our countrymen who most prevailed when their extremity was the worst? I say that we shall go through with the matter."

The conference was at an end. We took small rest that night. Every moment was required to enable us to endure defence. As well as we could, we repaired the tackling, and bent new sails in place. We stopped the leaks, and fished the masts and yards. We mended the pumps, and gave to the wounded such sustenance as time allowed.

In spite of our efforts the *Covenant* lay half a wreck. The wind was rising, and carried with it a fine spray, sharp against the face, and bitter in the mouth. We lay helpless, save for the help of God, on the bosom of the great deep, our lights streaming forth, red, and green, and white, the one bright spot in the vast night.

The morning came, a morning rosy and comely. The sun shot up from the underworld with no rank of clouds to herald his approach, and so sudden, the stars in the heaven were surprised at finding themselves abroad. A glory of light flooded the sea, and turned it into a river of gold. The one poor flaw was the *Covenant* and two of the Spaniards looming up under the sun, creeping away to hide themselves from the light. Captain Pratt was on deck, though stiff from his wounds, with his perspective glass in his hand.

"Some filthy breeze has carried them beyond our reach," he cried when he saw their poor efforts at escape, "but we shall overtake them, if the *Covenant* has not forgotten her trade." So we crowded after them with what speed we could, yet our ship could but limp along like a wounded bird, and made no large froth, as was her wont. Captain Pratt continued to stand on the poop with an earnestness of visage.

"We shall yet make the rod of vengeance to fall upon them," he declared, and cursed them according to the cursings in the Scripture. We carried on all day but it was clear that they would be lost in the night. So another conference was held, and after a profusion of talk, by the aid of humility, we gave over with such cheerfulness of heart as we could command. Besides, the weather was threatening, of which the going down of the sun was a warning. It blazed like a ball of fire until it was quenched in a bank of leaden-hued clouds. That night the weather became foul. When we looked out of the hatches in the morning, the sea was grown big, and that day we could not take the height.

It was no time to be abroad upon the deep in our wounded condition, so we made shift as if to return to our secret haven from which we were bidden in such haste. But we were now, so well as we could estimate, a good space from the land, and the wind shrinking, we fell into a sea covered with yellow herbs, having a fruit like gooseberries. It was more like a field than a sea, and so thickly grown, neither could a man see the water, nor a ship pass through without great labour.

The sails for lack of wind flapped against the mast, and for many days we suffered the inconvenience of heat and drought, our water butts being shot away. The store of water became so foul that the men would hold their noses, when they were about to drink. But at length even this failed, and other drink we had none, save two or three spoonfuls of vinegar to each meal, and as much wine wringed out of the lees. We had one or two seasons of refreshment when some small rain fell, and once when it hailed, we gathered up the stones, and did eat them as if they had been the pleasantest comfits in the world. When it rained the men would

hang up clouts till they were wet, and then suck out the water, whilst others, like dogs, would lick the decks and masts.

At length a cloud came up and burst with a horrible storm and noise. The waves met on both sides, and clasped the *Covenant* as if they would crack her ribs. The big water overraked her waist like a mighty river running over, and with the extremity of evil weather, she was like to be shaken asunder. In our great need the rudder staff broke, and we had to rule the helm with a rope, and drove for two days and two nights going from the rudder to the pumps, so that we were in no state of leisure to eat, or sleep, or dry our clothing.

As the night fell we saw upon the main yard a certain sign, which Captain Pratt said was a constellation, engendered by moisture and vapours. It skipped from one place to another, and though we were in no good state to think curiously upon such things, we gazed earnestly upon it, as we were assured that it was a token of better comfort, which it was.

In the morning the sea was grown calm, and the pilot, taking the sun, gave the pleasant intelligence that unawares we were near the fair land in which was our commodious harbour. So we entered sore-stricken and bruised, and in want of many things.

Even now there was no rest. We set ashore in tents those who had been hurt. When the tide was high the ship was drawn ashore; when it fell, a barrier of earth and stones was erected round about. We stripped her and hove her down; and there she lay upon the hard sand, as comfortable as if she were in the cove of Cork, as Captain Pratt observed. The forges were set up;

the holes in the hull were fitted with pieces of well-seasoned wood, and plates of iron were fastened to secure them. A new mast was cut from the forest; yards were fashioned from the damaged spars, and new sails taken from the stores.

After much labour our task was accomplished, and the Covenant was ready for another baptism in the great deep, her sides intact and sound, her bottom staunch and clean. We broke down the barriers, and with the tide she rose upon her element again. Another day served to complete the work. With ordnance and stores replaced, with masts well stopped, yards stiff, and cordage taut, we were equipped for any voyage.

CHAPTER XXV

In the evening I had withdrawn from the ship's company, and was sitting alone on the bank of that lovely island, smoking good tobacco, and watching the darkness fall — two occupations which fit well together. Looking up to the heavens I beheld a pleasing sight. The sun had gone down into the sea, and for a space I could only gaze and wonder. Above the water was a sea of gold which gave off a luminous colour, and along the horizon a flame of orange was softened into such a green as I have seen upon the harvest apple. ing over all was a mass of purple in ledges edged with gold. Then the colour died away, leaving only a blackness in the purple, a dulness in the gold, and a deadness in the sea, with a lonely native craft bearing bravely away in a rippling breeze which had come up from the West. The moon must have been up for some little time, but only now became visible above the trees.

Captain Pratt was coming along the sand. He was conversing with himself, and was most immoderate in his words. When he saw me resting so quietly, he lifted his eyebrows, and would have passed by.

"Here is a bank blooming with flowers, and very restful," I said, inviting him to a seat.

"The flowery banks which I would see are these waves blooming red with corpses." This was his answer to my kindness, and he remained where he was. But

my spirit being sweetened by the occupations of watching and thinking, I pressed him again to join me.

"My heart is troubled," he confessed. "I thought to find some easement in these parts, but could not. I fear that I am possessed of a devil."

"It is this renegade and outcast life which ails you," I told him plainly.

"I am fitted for no other," he lamented bitterly. "My old heart is seared; and within, it is the hold of the foul spirit of hatred."

"We are two men," I rejoined, "who have no hearth nor home. My own heart would grow hard did I not cherish in it a blossom of memory."

"Very like, very like," he answered shortly; "yet, in wandering over the seas you miss much care and grief."

"Many of our brave fellows are even now looking homeward," I persisted. "Is not their cheerfulness good to see?"

"I have no lot nor share in such things," he declared vehemently.

"Yet," said I, "their very hopefulness must lighten your gloom."

"There is no ground for hope. No soul of them shall find its mate till mine is at rest."

"Are we going against the Spaniard again?" I asked, with new distaste for a violent life.

"Else why were I alive?"

"Have we not accomplished enough for reasonable men?"

"Are you, too, going to leave me?" asked Captain Pratt bitterly.

"I shall never leave you so long as you pursue a reasonable course; yet I must admit of a great longing to have news of certain friends."

"Once I also had friends," he said precipitately, as if he had been betrayed into the admission; for, apart from the matter of his father, and the Inquisition, which he related when first I joined the *Covenant*, I could think, from what he refrained from saying, that he was without human interest, without beginning of days or end of years.

"It is so," he continued fiercely. "They call me a pirate in their warrant for arrest; but even a pirate may have had a home, a child, and friends."

"That may well be," said I; "for I once even knew of a captive in the galleys who had a daughter."

"What of this galley slave and his daughter?" Captain Pratt enquired, with no great show of interest, and eying me rather coldly.

"It was the daughter alone whom I knew; but she was very near to me."

"Is this the little child of whom Hugh Cornish spoke, the one whom you rescued from the highwaymen? You told me at our first meeting that she was dead."

"It is the same," said I.

"Why then did you not tell me all?" he demanded.

"Because I thought that she was dead, and did not wish to increase the violence of your disposition against the Spaniard."

"Apart from my disposition, what further do you know?" he asked searchingly.

The story of Beatrix fell from my lips. I repeated the Alderman's narrative in its entirety, and when I mentioned the encounter of father and child in the Bay of Gibraltar, Captain Pratt's passion was something to see.

"This was indeed the admiral's child," he declared, and smote his hand upon his breast.

When his passion subsided I told of our meeting at the house in Lombard Street and of the disaster which overtook us there.

"God has indeed cursed me," he cried fiercely. "Why did not Hugh Cornish know of this meeting with her father! Then she need not have perished in the fire."

"But she did not perish in the fire," I explained, as quickly as his violence would permit.

"How then? You told me she was dead. Is she still alive?"

"That is the question which I ask myself a thousand times in the day. It is to find an answer that I am fain to abandon the Spaniard."

"Am I to get the rest of this relation without the thumbscrew or the rack?" cried Captain Pratt, laying his hand upon me as if he would do me violence. So, as quickly as I could, I told of my meeting with her foster brother in the forest, and how I learned from him that Beatrix had escaped with her life, and left England in the Bounty.

"The Bounty!" he repeated. "Do you not remember how we were permitted to defend the little bark against the Dunkirkers?"

"That was my first sea-fight: is it like I should forget it?"

He fell into a silence more intense than usual, so I added the few remaining facts which I knew, that the *Bounty* had put into Boston, and that her passengers were deported to the Bahamas in the *Mary Pollock*.

He made as if he did not hear. He was like a man incapable of either thought or feeling, and I was afraid his rage against the Spaniard, which was so fearfully aroused by this recital, would blind him to my desire to search for Beatrix. In this I was mistaken, for presently he took all direction out of my hands, as if the business were his own.

"We shall visit the inhabited places on these coasts," he commanded, in a still voice. "Then we shall return to England; and, commencing at the root, we shall deal with this matter in an orderly way." With this strange turn of the mind he walked out to where the waves were sobbing in the night, and was alone with them.

I remained where I was, vibrating with a new hope. After a little I saw coming along the beach, in the full light of the moon, one of our men, and it proved to be Hugh Cornish. His face was more grave than was its wont.

"In this business of ship-building," he began, "I have taken note of many things of civilised usage, spars, ropes, chains, and some articles of ship's furniture which never came out of the *Covenant*."

"What of that?" said I.

"I have enquired of the chief carpenter, and he tells me they are the product of a wreck which was made here without their knowledge, not long before, or indeed even after, their arrival."

"Where is this wreck?" I exclaimed, with a sudden fear at my heart.

"It lies along the coast not an hour from here; and I believe it might furnish some knowledge — good or bad," he added after a pause.

Captain Pratt came up at this moment, making a

sound like singing. I repeated what Hugh Cornish had to tell, and we started off in the direction where the wreck was said to lie. After walking interminably we rounded a low, rocky point, and there stretching away in the moonlight was a long spit of sand with a dark object at its outward point. We toiled on, and at length came upon the bones of a poor ship half buried in the sands of the tropic island, her back broken on the rocks, and the stern rising no higher than my head. In the feeble light I could yet read the name Mary Pollock. It seemed to burn itself on my brain.

The story was told. My heart became rebellious within me. I longed for the morning, when I might give back this life, and free myself from the burden of my sorrow, for it was greater than I could bear. Captain Pratt was taking note of the wreck. He thrust his knife into the planks, and dug out boring creatures which he examined curiously, and then clambered up the sides to examine what remained of the interior.

I was left alone in the darkness. I was sore stricken, and having gone apart a little way, I cast myself upon the sand. Every fibre in my body was crying aloud for Beatrix. Like a beast I longed for some secret place in which I might die. Like a man I yearned for human sympathy. Hugh Cornish came around the stern of the wreck, and when he saw me on the ground he came to where I lay.

"Why do you not leave me?" I said, as he knelt beside me, and placed his heavy hand upon my shoulder.

[&]quot;Because I love you."

[&]quot;Love me!"

[&]quot;I ever loved you, at least ever since you looked back

upon us with your young eyes and cried: 'Then I shall ride alone.'"

"But I never rode alone. Never did trooper of mine leave me without a knee to my knee, or an outstretched hand which I could touch in charge or in flight."

"Then you have forgotten the night when the enemy lined the hedge on the road to Bewdley, and lay concealed in the dry bed of the Brock."

"I do not remember that I rode alone. Else how could the sun have risen upon such a scene as we witnessed in that autumn morning, which followed?"

"Ay, but you looked back upon us, and put us to shame. From that moment we loved you."

"I was but young then, and doubtless you were wiser than I. You were an experienced soldier, and I was a raw youth."

"Think then how raw you must have been when you sought transport home from Scheveningen in the *Colster*, when the *Covenant* chased us as a wolf pursues a silly sheep."

"I trust that I have since cut a better figure as a soldier, than I did as a sailor upon that voyage."

"Even that night I conceived a fondness for the forlorn boy whom I found helpless in my sleeping place."

"I remember well that you gave me a piece of tobacco to eat, which, so far as I can recall, did not seem to mend my condition."

"It was the best which I could do. It was done in kindness, and the plant was in high reputation as a remedy."

By such trivial talk the adroit fellow turned the black current of my thought in the moment of its worst

intensity; but I had to endure a heavier pang when I realised that this recollection of my power had even for a moment blinded me to my most grievous loss, and made me faithless to my love. Even from this last bitterness I was recalled by the voice of Captain Pratt whose enquiry had passed out of my mind.

"When did the Mary Pollock sail from Boston?" he cried, as he leaped from the broken bulwarks to the sand.

"About the time of our leaving Salem, after we had refitted the Covenant," I replied, as I arose to my feet.

"That is now ten months ago. This ship has not been here above two months, and I guess, from this rotten mess of cargo, that her last port was in the Virginias."

"If you know so much," I said, with impatience that any one should attempt to instil hope into my mind, "perhaps you can tell me where her passengers have landed."

"I am not a prophet, nor a fool," he cried, and his vehemence aroused me.

"My speech arose merely from despair," I said humbly enough. "I have suffered the last things, and there is no ground for hope."

"Your fears and hopes are delusions; they have no bearing upon the business in hand."

"Is there really any evidence upon which we may proceed?" I found courage to ask.

"That we must find out. First, we shall go back to Boston." Hugh Cornish was already on his way to the *Covenant*, leaving Captain Pratt and me to follow.

A strange thing is the human heart. But a moment

ago all was over; and here was hope raising itself up again like a bruised flower to the light, when the heavy foot has passed.

"Can it be that Beatrix still lives?" I marvelled. "Can it be that she still waits my coming, or craves some news of me, whilst here I am squandering my time in this fag end of the world, instead of braving all for her sake?"

"Let me hear further of this maid," said Captain Pratt, not heeding my speech. "Was she well favoured?"

"She had a dignity of stature and a gracefulness of motion which no one could rival, and such comeliness of countenance as I never thought to witness." I was grateful for this occasion of talk concerning Beatrix, and gladly continued the catalogue of her attractions.

"You have omitted to mention the littleness of her mouth, and the order and whiteness of her teeth," Captain Pratt continued, as if in mockery, and stepping lightly.

"All you have said is true, none the less," I answered shortly, for I was incensed that he should take advantage of a man in my condition.

"There is a vice of praising as well as a vice of detracting," he went on.

"I do not praise beyond what her merits warrant."

"And do you think to mate yourself with her?"

"Ever since Alderman Sherwyn went bonds for me, and took me within his house, this union with Beatrix has been in my mind, and I cannot yet think that this plant which I have nourished is destined to wither and die."

"This business of marriage is not to be undertaken lightly," he said. "A wife is like a strong-headed horse with a desperate hard mouth. You pretend to guide, but in reality you go wherever she leads. You are meant to be something more than a begetter of children; your mind is fitter for the hazard of war and affairs of state."

"These duties are not incompatible," I said, in a harsh voice.

"It is as hard," he continued, "to govern a family as it is to govern a state; if domestic cares are less important, they are at least equally importunate. Men born to war, and of a spirit equal to the performance of high deeds, are unfitted for mating with women."

"You, too, are fitter for war than the exercise or understanding of love matters," I said, turning upon him. "Beatrix stands by herself, and does not come within your general denunciation."

"You said that before," Captain Pratt replied drily. "We are back where we started, that is how all these discussions end." I thought the subject closed; but, to increase my irritation, after a little he returned to it.

"Was her mind well nourished?" he asked, in so kindly a voice that I was disarmed.

"She was more than well furnished with knowledge, and she possessed a most agreeable humour."

"You render a good account of the maiden," he said still more kindly.

"I have not told the half." Captain Pratt remained silent for a good space, then roused himself to say:

"I like you well. I like you well. I shall give you a hand."

By this time we had reached our sleeping camp. The galley on its blocks towered high in the shadow of the tropic trees. The men lay in their tents or upon the deck of the *Covenant*, which swung at her anchors in the bay. The embers sent up a fitful flame into the night, and we two stood alone beneath the great sky with one thought and one hope.

"To-morrow, in the morning, we sail for the place which we call home," said my friend, "and we shall see this great business to the end."

"My heart and my life are in it," I rejoined. Then I made as if to seize his hand, whilst offering thanks for this great service.

"All that you say is, I have no doubt, very true," he said, "but this nocturnal air breeds fevers; therefore, you had better betake yourself to sleep."

"What of the Spaniard?" said I, by way of test.

"That is another matter," said Captain Pratt, taking a brand from the ashes, and applying fire to the galley. As the flames mounted into the heavens I heard him recite: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

CHAPTER XXVI

In the morning Captain Pratt was the first afoot. I arose late, for I had spent the night in tossing to and fro. I could not pierce the future. Yet it was evident that he had a thing in his mind. That gave me courage and hope, so that at length sleep brought its sweet oblivion. When I reached the deck the tropic sun was warm, and the crew were assembled for conference.

"'Tis Ho for the Bay of Boston," cried Captain Pratt with great cheerfulness, when he caught sight of me in the distance.

"The old man's face shines as if he had seen an angel in the night," Hugh Cornish whispered in my ear.

"It may have been so," I assented.

"He was bent upon hospitality, and intended to offer the refuge of that galley to some one. When I saw the mischance of fire which befel it, I was afraid it was your doing." My old comrade looked at me with enquiry.

"It was not I. It may have been the angel which, as you say, Captain Pratt beheld in the night."

A new spirit showed in the men's faces, for we were homeward bound and there was treasure to be spent. Captain Pratt took his stand upon the capstan-head, and addressed the crew. He explained, with his habitual

prudence, that they carried too much treasure in one bottom. He proposed, and all agreed, that a fair portion of the gold and silver should be left behind in concealment, in case of accident to the *Covenant* upon her approaching voyage. Therefore the men appointed one to accompany Hugh Cornish and myself to see to the matter, and we carried away in a boat a fair store into hiding, and none were to know the place but ourselves.

We spent the day upon the task, and on the journey we passed the spot where the wreck of the Mary Pollock lay. We went ashore, and examined again the remains of the poor ship, half embedded in the sand, and exposed to the merciless bleaching of the sun. No invention or device grew up in my mind, which might breed hope. The one fact which was clear was that the Mary Pollock had sailed from Boston nearly a year ago with Beatrix Sherwyn and her companions, and now lay a rotten wreck before our eyes. Hugh Cornish shook his grizzled head, and his grave face grew yet more grave.

"I cannot read the riddle," he said; "we must leave it in better hands than ours."

We completed our task of concealment; and, after the manner prescribed by the romancers, we wrote on a piece of paper certain directions by which any authorised persons might discover the treasure, even without our aid. When we returned to the *Covenant* the darkness was falling. We had been working hard. Now we made pleasure our business, diverting ourselves with trivial games and hearty laughter. We had an evening of ease and quietness, with a large lecture by the seaman from Concord. He was expert in the Old Testament, and made a long relation to such as would listen of the wonderful doings which are recorded there. In the end we sang a hymn, and that unhallowed region was sweetened by our psalmody. Next day we were upon the sea again, and all very cheerful.

To me the future was inscrutable; and, as we came into colder weather, I was filled with apprehension of the turmoil in Boston, lest it might entirely confuse us in our search into the fate which befell Beatrix Sherwyn. I said as much to Captain Pratt, and expressed the wish that we were bending our course to the Virginias, or elsewhere.

"That will come in good season," he answered cheerfully. "Upon this voyage our freight is too valuable. The last time I came down the river from the Virginias I had to give them five guns to clear the way. We shall first see how blows the wind in Massachusetts Bav."

So we carried on, until one early October morning, we sighted the hills of New England cowled in mist, and heard the sound of the Castle gun which signified to the people that a ship was coming up the harbour. Hugh Cornish, misliking secrecy, as he said, touched off a piece, and, to give notice that we were not shorthanded, he discharged six more guns.

This shooting off of cannons brought a great concourse of people to the Long Wharf, and we saluted again with great noise and combustion. All this time Captain Pratt and I were debating how we should be received, for we were both attaint, I of treason, and he of piracy on the high seas. In the end we agreed

to charge the guns, as a guarantee of peace and leave them primed in Hugh Cornish's care, so that there might be no difference of opinion. We desired quietness, if not fellowship; not because we were afraid, but because we thought it best, and talk of peace comes most fitly from a strong man's mouth. Therefore, we were resolved to oppose force to firmness, and so prevent useless argument.

A message of amity arrived in handsome terms, signifying that Captain Pratt was expected in the Town Hall, and a pledge was given that no violence need be feared. He extended the invitation and protection to myself, so we were both conducted ashore by two or three of our own fellows, and they were directed to be at hand for the sake of preserving the peace. Order was also made that none should be permitted to ascend the ship's side without our authority.

At the landing place we were met by a great throng of people; but the persons of quality, we were informed, were engaged in deliberation at the town-meeting. We were escorted with some pomp to the hall, which was above a mile from my old fortifications on the Neck, and so not far from the water's edge. Upon the way we were accosted by several friends. Amongst them was a prudent man whom Captain Pratt presented to me as Henry Cassils, the silversmith. He instructed him to proceed on board the Covenant, taking with him his acids, balances, and tools, to make an inventory of the treasure which we carried, and remove it to his strong room, where it would be subject to order, and then divided to each in lawful coin to the satisfaction of all.

As we approached the meeting place where the magistrates, ministers, and elders were in session, we took note of the increasing warmth of our greeting, and Captain Pratt guessed that our coming was opportune, either because they wished us to convoy some cargoes to the French settlements upon the Bay of Fundy, or desired to consult about some impending danger to the colony. We reached the Town Hall and entered by a flight of stone steps which faced the wharf, whilst a good concourse of people went in by the side door.

The meeting was in session, and we advanced to the platform at the extreme end. John Northcott was now Governor, and he was seated in his half-round chair, attired with some pomp in a scarlet cap, a green waistcoat bound about with a gay colour, and wearing leathern breeches and buff doublet. The Governor had upon either hand the Assistants; and, when his eyes fell upon me, it was as if he had seen a ghost, or one who had risen from the dead. But his frown was as black, and his speech as bitter, as when he had helped to cast me out amongst the evening wolves.

"Captain Dexter," he addressed me in his serenest voice, "do you desire to surrender yourself?"

"That is my intention," I said, "if I may have reasonable terms."

"Then I shall summon the constable." The constable came forward — the man whom I had upon another occasion instructed in his duty.

"You will keep Captain Dexter safe," said the Governor, "till order is taken concerning him."

"Captain Dexter is safe enough," my companion broke in; "yet I give you thanks for your solicitude."

"Do not think," said the Governor, turning to me, his anger rising, "to trifle with us again."

"I come," said I, "in no spirit of trifling, or of strife. I would apprise you that this long time I have not had the advantage of brotherly communion, on account of my outcast life. I come in a dutiful, friendly, and Christian way, to solicit the hand of fellowship in a good cause."

"That none can claim," the Governor retorted upon me. "You forcibly removed yourself beyond our jurisdiction, and have forfeited all privileges which belong to the elect."

"We are claiming nothing," cried Captain Pratt. "You sent for me, and I chose to bring Captain Dexter for company. It is my habit to choose my own companions. I am here, these several minutes, standing like a stork on the Charles bar. If you have business to transact, I charge you to open it up, for Captain Dexter and I have weighty matters in train. But I notify you first, that his hand is joined in mine, and what you say to one, you say to all." Captain Pratt turned to go, and I to follow, but Mr. Pendleton, the former Governor, who was now only a magistrate, put forward his hand to detain us.

"You, Captain Pratt, and you also, Captain Dexter," he began in his old prudent, politic way, "were once a support to us. We are again in a common danger, and desire to consult with you concerning it." With this he invited us to a seat, and the Assistants made room in so generous a way, that the Governor suppressed his wrath as well as he could.

"Speaking for myself," I began to address the assem-

blage, "I have never desired aught but amity, and quiet; and, though I was sore mishandled by some in this colony, I am yet ready to adventure something in its support." This declaration met with warm approval from all.

"We judged rightly," said Mr. Pendleton graciously, "that you were men in every way competent for a great enterprise, by reason of your experience, and the gains which you have made."

"I, too, am willing to take my part," Captain Pratt assented, without heeding the import of the last remark. "But it is not by a few that anything lasting can be accomplished. All must adventure at least their hearts in any public business; and we, in common with all who dwell in this community, are willing to proceed to that length."

"We are then of one mind," Mr. Pendleton agreed cheerfully. "Each of us is as ready to engage to his fullest capacity, and your coming is a comfort to us."

"We give you thanks," said Captain Pratt, purposely answering wide of the mark, "for the warmth of this welcome, which is more than private persons could expect, especially since we have been engaged upon no public enterprise, but one designed to breed some profit to ourselves. Yet such exercise must tend to the public profit also, and I look to seeing many ships go forth from this harbour to hunt the whale, and kill the herring. There are here many stout, strong fellows, who can go down to the sea, and salt, pickle and barrel the fish in that cursed north land given by God to Cain; and when they are come home again,

honest men can sort, and sever, and pack the same with good brine in strong oak casks."

"I commend you much for this encouragement to industry," the Governor broke in with impatience; "but laying aside the matter of amity and quiet, and the killing of whales, and the salting of herrings, we have now to consult of the grave peril which we are in through the designs of the savages."

"As you know," said Captain Pratt, when this outburst was at an end, "we are not long returned from the sea, and would gladly learn the position of public affairs."

Then the Governor called upon his Deputy who gave a full account of the bad faith and evil intentions of the Indians; and when this was at an end, he declared that other public matters were in a state of composure, and that the present was a suitable time for rooting out those pernicious creatures who would neither hear the Gospel nor keep treaties.

"It may prove to be a larger matter than appears at first sight," Captain Pratt remarked, "and we should like to have an evening to deliberate upon it."

Accordingly the meeting broke up, and it was arranged that we should assemble on the following day to conclude the matter. Several persons were very cordial, and took us by the hand, especially the Reverend Increase Mayhew, and Elder Rutherford, a friend whom he had acquired.

But most of the magistrates and all the ministers stood aloof, not wishing to disclose the direction in which their sympathies lay, not being confirmed as to the reality of the danger to which the community was

exposed, nor assured of the extent to which we might be willing to lend our assistance. As we took our way by the familiar paths to my little house, I was in some distress as to what I should find at the end of the journey; but Captain Pratt reminded me that all would be in good order, as he had formally committed it to the magistrates' care before going upon his previous voyage. We were careful to make no engagements for the evening, as we desired to be free to send for such as might give us information for the shaping of our future course.



CHAPTER XXVII

WHEN Captain Pratt and I arrived at my little house, we found all in good condition, as he had promised; for the magistrates had well fulfilled their trust. Richard Thorpe was there before us with ample stores from the Covenant. He had a fire glowing in the chimney; not that the season was cold, but a sharp wind had sprung up with rain, and we were tender of flesh on account of our sojourn in tropic places. The fireside was too comfortable to be deserted, so we busied ourselves laying the billets of wood upon the andirons, which were of different heights, and between them a set of creepers, cast in the image of an armed man. for the better accommodation of the fuel. About the time of the lighting of the candles, that is to say, about six of the clock - for in October the night falls early in these parts - having eaten, we were refreshing ourselves with tobacco and a cordial draught.

"I observe that a better disposition has come into the hearts of the magistracy since you made trial of their hardness," Captain Pratt remarked, as soon as we began to feel comfortable.

"The people of New England, I am afraid, are about to pass through the fire. In the forest I learned enough to make me suspect that trouble would have come before this, had not the great sickness prevented it."

"I am of a like opinion," said my companion, speak-

ing into his glass, "and the proof of its urgency is the changed attitude of the magistrates towards us."

Captain Pratt then searched me very diligently in relation to my experience with the Indians, making much of the visit of the Iroquois, and of Nimrod the Wampanoag, into the country of the Narragansetts.

"It looks to me," he said, "as if these colonies were face to face with a confederacy which it may be hard to break, and I think I see in the northern sky a small cloud, no larger, let us say, than the hand of a Jesuit."

"Certainly the Iroquois was expert in their doctrines," said I.

"Tell me further of this emissary; he appears to have been a savage of great capacity and cunning." Then I related all I knew.

"A traveller of that sort never came down the river on peaceable business," Captain Pratt observed with great gravity. My heart rebelled at being drawn aside from the search for Beatrix, even if by my single hand I could save the whole colony.

"We did not come here to deal with their wars or their policies," I protested. "We came upon a private adventure. This colony has never been friendly to me, and it was an enemy to one whom I hold dearer than myself."

"True," said Captain Pratt soothingly, "and we are nowhere commanded to forgive our friends, nor the enemies of our friends. Yet, even were Beatrix a child of my own, I should think first of my larger duty."

"I accept your reproof; yet it is a hard way, and I do not know if I can follow it."

"We need not neglect one duty because we have

another to perform. There are two of us. Do you take the *Covenant* and proceed to the Virginias, and I will remain here; or I shall leave the pick of the *Covenant's* crew behind, and go myself with such as I can secure to conduct this search."

"There is no question of which shall be my choice, though searching for Beatrix is nearer to my heart than the fighting of savages. My faculty is for the land, and yours for the sea."

"Those who inhabit here are in the right, for all their faults," said Captain Pratt in an impressive way. "If we leave them to make trial of this vengeance without such help as we can give them, then are we the veriest cowards and seekers after our own pleasure. These settlements are like a flock of kids in a kennel of wolves."

"Beatrix may be in dire distress," I complained, for I could not yet bring myself to it.

"I misjudge her much, if she would not rather have you cast your life away in savage warfare, than save it, or hers either, at the cost of a duty neglected."

There was no answer to this, so we made an agreement on the spot, subject to such further information as we should receive, that Captain Pratt should sail for the Virginias with so many of the Covenant's crew as he needed; that I should keep the remainder as the core of a small army of volunteers to drive the savages westward, and that we should appoint the head waters of the Hudson for a rendezvous. We hoped to see the business through before the winter set in. If he found Beatrix in the Virginias, it was agreed that he should conduct her up the Hudson, and there await my coming; or, if occasion should arise, he could operate against the

Indians from the rear. When this great matter was concluded we grew cheerful again, and sent Richard Thorpe to bid Mr. Mayhew and Mr. Rutherford to join us, as we desired full knowledge of public affairs.

About the time we should have expected our visitors, there was heard a clapping upon my outer door. At first I thought it was only the rioting of the wind, for by this time the sky was black with clouds, and the air roaring with rain, so I did not look that they would venture forth. But the knocking became more violent, and to avoid damage to the wood, I seized a candle and opened the door. It proved, after all, to be Samuel Rutherford, alone, and I welcomed him, perhaps with more warmth than was necessary. The elder had the gift of silence, and his exercise of it was painful, until he had placed himself in my oak chair with Russia leather to the seat. Then he saluted Captain Pratt in a formal way, and looked fixedly at the thick and fragrant reek which he was exhaling.

"I came here to discuss with you matters pertaining to the salvation of this colony," he began in a hard voice. "But, permit me first to say that I perceive you are enjoying much fleshly felicity. I also perceive in this new vice of tobacco-whiffing the luring voice of the devil. It goes hand in hand with the sin of drunkenness."

"I thought the same myself," Captain Pratt replied lightly, "until I had attained to some skill in the rolling of the leaf, and in the other manual exercises of the art. Besides, the promise is to me that I can uptake any deadly thing, and it shall not come nigh unto me."

"True it is," said Mr. Rutherford, "custom and conversation will make the fiercest creatures familiar."

"And true it is," rejoined Captain Pratt, "a familiarity with the spirit of humility and love disarms the power of pride and self-righteousness."

I was moved to mirth internally by the surprise in the elder's face, when he heard this shrewd retort; but I made no outward sign, as it was my one desire to restore quietness, and gain the information which we sought. Therefore I took a part in the conversation, hoping to divert it into a quieter channel.

"I call to your mind," said I, "the case of Jeremy Houchin who, as all are aware, was in the power and bondage of Satan for eighteen years, and affirmed that assurance had come to him, whilst he was in the act of putting forth his hand to take a pipe of the unclean herb."

"Do you then look for assurance by any other means than through the ordinances?" the elder demanded with horror in his voice.

"I have read that a worse and greater than Jeremy Houchin obtained assurance whilst he was journeying from Jerusalem to Damascus upon no such peaceable business as the charging of a pipe."

"And I perceive by your speech and by these things which you let down into your stomach, that you too, Captain Nicholas Dexter, are yet in the bondage of carnal lusts."

Captain Pratt laughed aloud at the result of my interference, and pride entered my heart, it may be the more easily by reason of the warmth and flavour which was in my brain. It also came into my mind with new force that it was not long since these same elders had affirmed in the open court that I was of those who are handed over to the power of Satan to destroy. Besides, I had

become interested in the controversy, and desired to make a good figure before my stalwart companion.

"Though I abstain not from these good creatures," I said by way of rebuke, "I abstain from rigidness in spirit, principles, and practice, and from wrong to truth or conscience by a sinful compliance."

"I am now convinced that to your other sins you have added the evil of the Laodiceans, for which many have been convented before the Church for advice."

To this I made a sharp reply, and I was so far left to myself as to boast that my outward condition was such that I neither sought the commendation, nor feared the reproof, of any elder in New England.

"Then you declare yourself to be of the wicked, and the wicked may flourish for a season like any green bay tree." This was the elder's fitting reply and there was like to be some heat, had not Captain Pratt perceived that the thing was going too far, and led it back to the original point of dispute.

"I am directed by my own experience to say that, since I have joined the company of smokers, I have purged the system of fevers, gouts, and rheums. Besides, I am informed by Stephen, the leech, that for distillations on the lungs, crudities of the stomach, and certain other ailments, this plant, which some call a weed, has no rival. And I am further assured that its ill effects, if any, arise only amongst those who eat to surfeiting, and are fallen under the dominion of drink."

"I speak not to you," Elder Rutherford answered quickly, "I know not even if you are a professor, or if your heart is tinctured with a sense of religion. It is very like that you too are yet in the bonds of iniquity

and the gall of bitterness." I looked upon this as uncivil language to a friend in whom I had much solace, a guest, moreover, in my own house.

"You do wrong to speak so, even of an unbaptized man," I said, "and Captain Pratt I know for a virtuous gentleman." My friend made as if he did not hear, and only the more rolled forth clouds of exhalations, and moistened his throat as often as occasion demanded.

"I reprove sin where I find it," continued the elder, for he would not let the matter drop. "Being under a covenant of grace myself, I am quick to discern the operation of a covenant of works in another."

"'Covenant'! 'Works'!" exclaimed Captain Pratt.
"Where would your 'grace' be now, had it not been for the works of my Covenant and her crew in this unthankful wilderness, when the last handful of meal was vanished from your barrel, and the tawny savages were on your frontier, with fire in their eyes, hatchets in their hands, and the devil in their hearts?"

Elder Rutherford was silent, but it was evident that he had resort to that excellent treasure of secret prayer. The choler of Captain Pratt was rising, and I feared he would seize the fire fork, and effect some violent purpose.

"I do not deny that once you were a shield and buckler to us," said Elder Rutherford at length, when he was inwardly strengthened by the exercise of his gift, "therefore the more do I regret that God has withdrawn Himself from your unsavoury heart."

"Perhaps, then," cried the bold seaman, "God will withdraw the serpent which lies coiled in the Indians' breast, as you say He has withdrawn Himself from mine."

"Your heart is filled with sottishness and vanity, your body with lusts, and your soul with darkness," answered the elder with a great frown.

"You, Elder Rutherford," I interposed, "have an unspeakable delight and gift in the heavenly vocation of catechising. In converse, deportment, and garb, you are as a rod of spikenard in this poor desert; yet likewise has Captain Pratt been an instrument of the Lord to this people. Now I am convinced you do not well to catechise this man who has seen the wonders of the great waters, and is likewise a man of war, as you would a frail and ill-nourished member of the community." These sweet words only served as oil to the flames.

"This fellow is not meet to come into this jurisdiction," the good man protested, as he arose from his seat, "and I am in doubt if he should be deemed proper to go out from it. I much fear that you yourself are also turned out of the way, and are corrupted by his evil communications. I shall seek advice, not only in my closet, but, as I have said, from my fellows, and will proceed according to that direction." Then there was a sudden blazing up.

"You threaten me?" cried Captain Pratt. "As for coming hither, if all were like you, this colony would be seech me on bended knees, ere I should come again, and as for going hence, I can free myself in my accustomed way."

"You trust in an arm of flesh," Elder Rutherford retorted, "and those who use the sword shall perish by the sword."

"You make light of carnal weapons now," rejoined

the Captain, "but you were glad to hear their music, when the Indians were in the bushes."

I cast about for some words suitable to launch into this sea of dissension, but again the sound of rapping was heard on my door, above the tempest without, and the tumult within. As if my trouble were not great enough already, the voice of the Reverend Increase Mayhew was heard in the entry. "I beseech you have a care for the fame of this elder," I had scarce time to whisper to Captain Pratt.

At once there was an appearance of amity. Indeed, I could have wished it less marked; for, as I arose to receive my new guest, I unwittingly laid my smoking pipe at the elbow of Elder Rutherford. He had resumed his seat upon the chair of Russia leather at the round table, and near his hand was a moderate dish of liquor. At the same time, Captain Pratt, either by chance or lightness of mind, enveloped the countenance of Elder Rutherford in a halo of floating rings of smoke. When Mr. Mayhew entered, he having a greatness of soul, and a disdain of temporal matters, it was clear his mind was much wrought upon.

"Mr. Rutherford," he lamented, "have you not in your memory that it is not that which entereth into a man defileth him, but that which proceedeth out of his mouth, as I see you are defiled by this hideous reek." Elder Rutherford was stricken with horror.

"Sir," he protested, "I am justly punished; for in this company I have not kept myself free from the appearance of evil."

"You do well to confess your fault," said the minister calmly. "As for these two men we are much beholden

to them for their qualities, amongst which is not a weanedness from the things of this world."

"My fault is not so great as you take it to be," the elder protested sadly.

"Some sins, I know," said the minister, "are more heinous than others, and of their quality I do not judge. Of the smoking of this noxious plant I always speak freely. Of the drinking of healths, which I perceive you have been employed in, I will say that it is a thing of no good use; it is an incitement to drunkenness, quarrelling, and even bloodshed, besides occasioning much waste. It passes my belief that you should practise such an idle and pernicious ceremony."

Elder Rutherford being much cast down, laid open the whole matter, and Mr. Mayhew pretended to believe him.

"As I came near this abode," he said, "I thought I heard the sounds arising from social glee; but if, as you say, it was but the hubbub of quarrelling, that is an easier matter to adjust."

Then Mr. Mayhew sat with us, and we all took a cup of burnt Madeira wine, after which we had much discourse upon the impending danger. We had sundry other refreshments which Richard Thorpe was careful to supply, and as all heat had long ago passed away, Mr. Mayhew improved the occasion, and drew many observations from it. After these devout and useful reflections, he made a prayer, not long, but very pertinent, and concluded by singing a psalm, in which we joined.

As these two good men were leaving us, they praised me for the innocent and merry entertainment, which they had enjoyed. Then Captain Pratt and I tarried



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long, and smoked away much time to no good purpose, excepting that we had witty and pleasant talk; and, being taken with a spirit of mirth, did sing some songs, less spiritual than those in which we had previously been engaged.



CHAPTER XXVIII

As the town-meeting for considering the declaration of war against the Indians was called for the afternoon, Captain Pratt and I lay late that morning. When we came to the place of assembly, we were strong in our resolve to put aside private business for the general good. But the devil, as sayeth that witty and valiant gentleman, and doughty seaman, Sir Walter Raleigh, "though he cannot transact his business publicly, as in former times, is as industrious as ever, and creeping into the minds of men, and dwelling in the tabernacles of their hearts, works even more effectually." The following will serve as an example.

The occurrence of the evening before, in which Captain Pratt, Elder Rutherford and myself, and the Reverend Increase Mayhew were concerned, namely, taking comfort in those noble creatures, tobacco and soft cordials, in my new house, was not barren in producing trouble, and all but brought our good designs to naught. How it became noised abroad, I know not. It may be that as Elder Rutherford was taking his way home, his house being in the hollow below the Common, he was communing aloud upon the subject of his misadventure, and was overheard by some dissolute fellow. True it is, a man who has drunk unduly is unapt to keep anything secret. For, though it was ordered that a watch be established which should, in a moderate tone, cry the

time of night; and, as they walked their round take up the loose people, yet there was no surety that one loose fellow had not escaped.

When the meeting was opened, and Captain Pratt arose to announce the great tidings that we and ours, and all we possessed, were at the disposal of the community, at no one knew what cost to ourselves, the Governor interrupted him and bade him resume his seat; "for," said he, "there is a young man here who has a thing to say."

Then he called upon one Thomas Try by name, and a confident fellow arose, instigated as before mentioned, and laid a charge. He said that about eleven of the clock the night before, or perhaps later, as he was coming out of Luke Vardy's tavern, he beheld Elder Rutherford overcome with drink, that he was reeling, and anon leaning against a huge elm which was an obstruction in his path. He said that he followed him, and heard him confess all, naming those who were his companions in sin.

"This meeting was called for an especial purpose," I cried, leaping to my feet; "and if other matters are to be debated, Captain Pratt and I will withdraw to the Covenant's deck."

"But we are obliged to notice this affair," the Governor declared, "for it is grown to a considerable size, and is a matter of grave concern — this charge that several who have the repute of godly men are fallen under the bane of drink."

"Then you may notice it without us," said Captain Pratt, rising from his seat also. But the Reverend Mr. Cotton came to the front, and was very conciliatory. "It would not be hard," he said, "to adduce proof that Elder Rutherford in his meditations is in the habit of speaking in figurative language which, if it were interpreted according to the letter, would proclaim him the chiefest of sinners."

Mr. Pendleton then observed that Elder Rutherford was present, and could speak for himself; "for," said he, "in view of our present evil case, I cannot but desire that the thing be disproved. We grudge to no one a reasonable recreation, but I must have ample proof before I believe that such an evil is come amongst us."

Elder Rutherford was then called upon to stand forth, and it aroused my pity to behold so sad a spectacle. He presented a firm and even noble appearance with his long hair lying over his collar; but I was cast into an extreme sweat to hear him confess that he had been enticed out of the rigid way, and that he had made use of the words alleged against him.

"I had designed to have some discourse with Captain Dexter," he explained, "upon certain weighty matters, and entered into his house. But far from being a ready sharer in the practices spoken of, I made bold to speak against them, when some heat supervened; yet I have a heavy burden on my conscience that I presented an appearance of evil."

"Do you, then, admit the abuse of these good creatures?" the Governor inquired.

"So much as I have said," answered Mr. Rutherford, "that I confess."

"I myself," Mr. Pendleton interrupted kindly, "carry with me on occasions a bottle of strong waters, whereof a sip now and then does me good."

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Then Mr. Mayhew arose of his own motion, and said with a slow and quiet utterance: "My walk and conversation since I am come into this community is known of all, and this is my answer to vagrants and varlets; no other do I give."

Captain Pratt, in all innocence, was shaping a wedge of the weed into a convenient shape, which he afterwards adjusted to the inner side of his cheek, and this aroused the ire of Henry Davenport, who was looking fixedly at him.

"I have of late observed manifold profanenesses overflowing this land like a flood," that minister began, "and I am minded to check them in whatever channel they run, be it high or be it low. We should now take order to enquire into the conduct of these men who, having no fixed abode, bring hither the filthy vices which are complained of." Captain Pratt could repress his gorge no longer.

"You look at me bravely," he broke forth. "You will look for me in vain, when you want the stronghold of Satan destroyed. Who was it, I ask, that once before cut off those tawny sons of Anak, and sowed salt where had been the waving corn and swelling pumpkin?"

"Ay, verily," interrupted Mr. Davenport, "the tongue of a dog was a comfort to Lazarus." Captain Pratt leaped to his feet, and there was like to be violent words had not several interposed.

"This present is no time for contention," said Mr. Pendleton when order had been restored. "We have lost sight of all discipline. I adjure you to cease this bickering, and hear what any one has to say for our comfort."

This cleared the air; so I argued that we had done all that prudence and justice demanded, and now I proposed that, laying aside all amity, we should proceed against the Indians as extremely as we could.

"It is agreed, then," demanded the Governor, "that we have no further parley?" And all signified assent by the erection of hands. There was much confusion when the result was announced and Captain Pratt was talking here and there.

"Hugh Cornish has sent word," he whispered in my ear, "that there is a king's ship in the offing under lower sails, and the wind being contrary to her, she is sending off a boat."

"This will interfere with your voyage to the Virginias," I cried in alarm.

"I am in no mood to have the *Covenant* scathed. She is new-fitted and painted from top to bottom, which is a work of labour and expense. If a king's ship blocks the way to the high seas this night, I may have to go to extremes."

"Then you will need such help as I can give. We cannot undertake too much, and my heart is in the Virginias."

"What if the Covenant should go down in this struggle? Who would then bring comfort to Beatrix? Prudence demands that we should divide our forces. Public policy and our private concerns are bound up together. I shall leave with you as many men as I can spare, and if I come through this danger, I shall send more to your help, keeping only so many as are necessary for the handling of the ship."

"This parting with you is a bitter thing," I protested.

"Do you go through with this Indian business, working your way to the westward. There is a trial of patience in store for you; but stand by your duty and let us hope for a joyful meeting. Serve these people well, and do not be turned aside by anything which they may have done. The force which I leave with you will be a warrant against the king's officers. You need fear nothing from the magistrates. You are too valuable to them."

There was some commotion amongst those who were nearest the windows; for, looking out upon the Bay, they reported the landing of a boat, and, as they thought, a ship in the offing, though it was now growing dark and hard to see. Captain Pratt put his arm in mine, and led me to the door.

"Run to the wharf," he cried, "and discharge a pistol, or even clap your palms together."

Now observe how great a matter a little powder will kindle. I hurried to the wharf, from which I could see the Covenant like a black shadow brooding over the Bay. All was silent and dark, but I could see lying near the shore a good-sized boat. So I touched off a horse pistol, and the thing fell out as Captain Pratt had predicted. First, there was the sound of a pipe on the Covenant, then the trampling of many feet, then the screeching of pulleys, and in a short space I beheld two boats approaching out of the darkness, of the bigness of those in which they take whales at Sable Island. Each was filled with six lusty men and armed fearfully. In a few words I detailed the whole business, and Hugh Cornish merely answered: "Ay, ay."

In an orderly manner one boat went off to where the stranger lay, but he fled into the darkness towards the

king's ship, after having landed two officers. Fearing violence I took with me a few of our fellows, and hastened to the meeting-house. After tramping up the hill, I ran ahead, and as I entered through the throng of townspeople, which was attracted by the tumult, Captain Pratt professed much pleasure in seeing me. At that moment the two officers appeared in the door, and the one with the most gold on his clothing raised his hand. Silence fell upon the assembly.

"I am come in the name of the king to demand the body of one Phineas Pratt who is charged with piracy upon the high seas." He spoke with great resolution and all eyes were turned on Captain Pratt. That seaman disengaged himself from the crowd of assistants and ministers, and stood to the front.

"In the name of the king, or the name of the devil," he cried, "'tis one to me — I fear and reverence each alike." The officers made as if to lay hands on him in spite of these high words.

"Nay, nay," he cried. "He that lays an arm upon me I shall cleave from the pate to the neck bone." The officers turned to the Governor, and demanded in the name of the king that he should execute the royal warrant.

"Let me have a reading of this document," said the Governor, and the officer handed the paper to him. He proceeded to study it with much minuteness, and the magistrates crowded around to have a sight of the paper. The moment was a painful one. Captain Pratt disclosed his whole mind, and mentioned several terms which were improper in such a company, though they indicated his interior state, and gave him employment till the reading was at an end.

"Your warrant runs in the king's name," said the Governor, addressing the officers, "and his word is a command to us all. But it is now past the sunsetting, and in the morning I shall call the magistrates together for its consideration."

"We were not advised that a king's warrant required consideration," the officer protested.

"I observe," said Mr. Pendleton in a moderate tone, as he scrutinised the paper closely, "that this warrant lacks the seals. We cannot permit the king's revenue to be defrauded. Ten shillings would hardly suffice to pay the charge. For myself — I cannot say. I should have to consult the books. It might be necessary to apply to England for advice, or even to send back the warrant for rectification of this grave error." Thereupon he turned to Mr. Cotton, and sought his view.

"I am no lawyer," Mr. Cotton replied, "and have not the desire to meddle in so intricate an affair. I am merely a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, ordained thereto by the laying on of hands. I am a watchman on the wall, and piracy I conceive to be a sin against God as well as against the king. If this evil thing has come amongst us, the ministers should first consult together, and then proceed in a church-like way."

The officers began to manifest some impatience, as Mr. Cotton proceeded to an elaborate argument upon the relation which should exist between the church and the state; and when he began to describe at some length the conduct of Asa who put the prophet in prison, and the removal of Abiathar from the priesthood, they could stand it no longer.

"In the meantime," one of the officers declared, "we

shall be answerable to the king for his prisoner;" and they made as if to apprehend Captain Pratt who stood with a look of entire unconcern in his face. The Governor protested that the magistracy must not be defied. Mr. Cotton insisted that the church should not be disregarded; but the officers became more insistent, and Captain Pratt at last grew violent.

"I am no prophet," he cried, "but I can predict that there are two men here who are foreordained to be hanged." The sailors from the *Covenant* were clamouring outside, and the officers looked at each other in alarm.

"Methinks I hear a sound," Captain Pratt continued when the tumult reached its height, "and, unless my ears deceive me, I heard it once before in the harbour of Gibraltar. It is unmeet that the crew of the Covenant, which once wrenched this head from the jaws of Spain, should allow two spaniels to bark unduly. God forgive me, for one who rules not well his own household. Some of my family are wayward, frolicsome, turbulent young men, and would lay rough hands upon you, as once before they did upon the father of your king, the elect of God."

The Covenant's men came streaming in at the front. I besought the Governor to find an escape for these two disturbers of the peace. The magistrates surrounding the officers forced and hurried them from the room by the side door. All was in confusion, with the trampling of the men, Mr. Cotton upon the platform drawing elaborate inferences, the Deputy bemoaning the violence of the scene, and Mr. Pendleton vainly adjuring the assemblage to peace. When peace was somewhat

restored Captain Pratt's voice was heard calling across the tumult, and silence fell.

"I am a cause of contention," he said, "so I shall go away. This colony is in peril. I shall leave Captain Dexter with so many men as I can spare, and I shall send back more in the morning when my danger is past. I shall proceed to the westward, and see if there is not a lion on the back of New England, which can be induced to release its hold. In the meantime do you all work manfully and in harmony. Above all be not rash with your mouths, and everything shall yet go well." With this he linked his arm in mine. The men fell in behind us, and we went marching down the hill to where the Covenant's boat lay waiting.

The wind was fair and strong from the shore, and the *Covenant* was under full canvas, save for the head sails. The bowsprit was turned inward, disclosing in the darkness a jagged mass of iron and timbers, which implied evil to any ship with which she might come in contact. Captain Pratt seized my hand.

"Patience and courage," he cried, "till all three meet again," and went up the side, leaving Richard Thorpe and ten men behind with me. As we put off to the shore, the *Covenant* swept down the bay into the darkness.



CHAPTER XXIX

THE little town of Boston was in commotion. Lights were in the windows, women were at the doors, men were in the streets, and a crowd of three persons came streaming out of Luke Vardy's tavern. The sound of cannon came up the wind in token that the *Covenant* was engaged. If Captain Pratt went down, the burden of the search for Beatrix would fall upon me, and my first business was to acquire information.

Since my return to Boston on the previous day I had refrained from making any mention or enquiry touching the deportation of Beatrix, because I did not desire to be angered. The matter could rest till the morning, and I invited my companions to pass the night as well as they could in my house. As it was not yet late, I changed my plan, and turned aside to see how the Indian business was proceeding, whilst the men were nothing loath to avail themselves of the entertainment which I had offered.

As I came to the door, I expected to have heard grave debate of policy, and of means for raising a force and prosecuting the war; but it fell out otherwise. The Governor was concluding an address upon forbidden sects; enumerating the evils which they had created, and the rigours which had been inflicted upon them. Chiefly he directed his remarks towards that body to which Beatrix belonged, and a sudden revulsion of

feeling took possession of me. I turned to go, and wash my hands of the Indian business, and to make all needful arrangements for following Captain Pratt to the Virginias; to forsake all, and follow where Beatrix led.

At that moment the Governor concluded with an outburst of passion, and he had no sooner taken his seat than Mr. Mayhew arose with so much agitation in his countenance, that I was compelled to remain an unwilling listener in the friendly darkness of the doorway.

"This matter is engendering discord," he began. "I am for all purity in doctrine, but to-night we have graver matter for debate; namely, the danger to which this colony is exposed, through the designs of the savages, and the enmity of their French affles who are inciting them to our ruin. When I came here, now one year ago, in company with Captain Phineas Pratt, and Captain Nicholas Dexter — two men who have been mercifully raised up this very day for our salvation — the first public act which I beheld was the punishment of these same Quakers, and their deportation to the Bahamas, or, as we afterwards learned, to the Virginias."

Standing in the darkness, unobserved by the speaker, I was able to hear every word, and I strained my ears to listen as he continued in a voice which vibrated with passion:

"Under the laws against Quakers and heretics, which were published through the streets with beat of drum, much wrong has already been done. I call to your minds the imprisonment of that stranger who came seeking his sister — a young woman who has caused more disquiet than Eve in the Garden."

My heart rebelled at the reference and I could scarce

keep my tongue within my teeth. Several who stood near took notice of my agitation, but Mr. Mayhew continued in the appalling sentence:

"I also call to your remembrance the return from the Virginias, within the past two weeks, and the still more recent banishment into the wilderness of this same young maiden, who by her behaviour proclaimed herself to us all as a noble, modest, and virtuous gentlewoman."

Upon hearing these words, I am since informed, for of myself I have no knowledge, I seized my sword, and striding up the hall, blind of brain, and dumb of speech, I dashed the writing desk in twain, and thereupon rushed out into the night. This much I do know: when I came to myself I stood at the edge of the sea, the dull waves sliding up to my feet, and falling like the thud of a corpse upon the earth, and my heart burning within me in impotent despair. The moon went down, and the stars went out with the morning, yet I was still wandering by the sea amongst the rocks, taking no heed of any earthly thing. But with the day there arose in my heart a great desire and determination to search every thicket and morass, until I had found the body of the castaway.

I entered Luke Vardy's tavern to have some refreshment. The landlord observed that I was wrought upon, and like a wise man refrained from speech. When the proper time came I arose and sought out Mr. Mayhew at his house, where I found him at prayer with his family. He received me warmly, and made no mention of the incident of the night before, until I had opened up my mind to him in private.

"Is it not true, as I suspect, that last night I fell into a passion?" I enquired.

"You did manifest some heat," he replied, "and I am grieved if any words of mine tended thereunto."

"It is the matter of Beatrix Sherwyn, to whom my life was pledged, whom I have not seen since the night she was carried forth from her father's burning house, whom I long mourned for dead. Tell me," I cried, "if you know where she is, or if she be yet alive."

"I can tell you neither," he answered in a gentle voice.

"Then tell me, I beseech you, what you can concerning her." And after some deliberation for setting his thoughts in order the good man began his narrative.

"No long time after you, and I, arrived from England with Captain Pratt, in the Covenant, I was standing upon the Town Wharf, watching a ship come up the harbour under the English colours. It was the Bounty from Bristol, which we had passed at sea, bound for the Virginias, and driven into the Bay by stress of weather. The Governor being absent upon business, the Deputy went on board; and, seeing the captain, apprised him of the law forbidding shipmasters to convey Quakers into this jurisdiction under a penalty of one hundred pounds, unless they would give bonds to convey them out again without delay. The captain was a churlish fellow, and gave a rough answer, so his ship was detained. After about a week, at the time, I believe, when you were taking knowledge of the country around Salem, he came before the magistrates and protested: 'These twoscore passengers have paid me the proper premium for their conveyance to the Virginias. They

did not pay me for being detained in these accursed seas, so I shall leave them behind, as I have more important business than listening to your talk. Be your own inquisitors. For the doctrines of their religion I care not so much as a strand of rope, and I shall neither pay a hundred pounds, nor shall I convey one soul out of this, unless their further passage be paid in gold.' Then making a display of force he sailed away; and, the magistrates taking further knowledge of those who arrived found several who had returned in face of their persecutors, as they said, and with them was the young woman, the mention of whom so affected you."

"Did the magistrates cause her to suffer any public indignity?" I asked hotly; "for if so I shall blood my hands in their lives."

"She was merely committed to the house of correction," said the minister; "but two of her companions, having returned contrary to orders, I lament to say, were hanged, and the remainder, herself included, were deported to the Bahamas in the Mary Pollock. This was just before you came within this jurisdiction. Shortly afterwards, a young man, claiming at one time to be her brother, and again that he was contracted to her, arrived, and threatened the magistrates with the vengeance of the king, his master. So he was cast into prison. Some say he escaped; some say he died in prison, and others that he perished of an epidemical sickness amongst the Wampanoags."

"I know all that," I said with impatience.

"Then," continued Mr. Mayhew, "you withdrew yourself, and accompanied Captain Pratt in his wanderings over the sea. Some few weeks ago a ship arrived

out of the Virginias, carrying several of the same sect in defiance of all orders. Amongst them was Beatrix Sherwyn."

"What then was the issue?" I demanded fiercely.

"This young woman remained in prison a short space, and there, I confess, I did everything to ameliorate her condition, and secretly sent my daughter to minister to her. I offered to become responsible for her safe-keeping, but was prevented, seeing that it had just been enacted that anyone harbouring or entertaining any of this sect should incur punishment."

"Did you have any conversation with her?"

"On many occasions, for I was deputed by the magistrates to visit her daily to redeem her from the errors into which, as they said, she might unwittingly have fallen. But as soon as I beheld her sweetness and sincerity, all thought of error left my mind, and I strove to comfort her as well as I could. I asked concerning her temporal state in England, and this was the relation which she made: 'I was nurtured with care, my father was a man of substance, but he lost his reason, and then his estate, in a great disaster of fire which overtook us. I had gained some tincture of religion from a godly and valorous soldier who had been cast into my life, but he also perished in the flames which destroyed our Then I was wholly alone and in sore straits; for I could not discover my brother who was in the king's service. Out of all these evils came much good; for I fell in with certain persons of a godly way of life. With the nature of their sect I had no concern: but I thought them to be of the same party as this brave soldier who had once saved my father's life. Without mature consideration I agreed to accompany them upon the business of founding a new colony in the Virginias. After our troubles on first landing here, we sailed for the Bahamas in the Mary Pollock; but the master had business in the Virginias, and was easily prevailed upon to land us there. After incredible hardships, our hopes of better things being frustrated, I fled to this land again, and found these fresh troubles.'"

This was Beatrix indeed. There was no doubt of that; yet I cannot tell whether my joy was greater in hearing of her, than my sorrow at the evils which had befallen. But the burden of doubt and slothfulness was lifted from me. There was no desire for revenge, nor any hatred in my heart; there was room alone for my great love, which drove all else before it, and with a sudden and strange cheerfulness, I asked Mr. Mayhew to complete the account of what he knew.

"The Governor was absent in Salem. Mr. Pendleton was upon a mission to the Indians. John Cotton was at Watertown, for the ordination of elders, and Mr. Dudley was chained to his bed. The court was held quite illegally, as I think; and though I was present and pleaded for delay, my voice was not heard. The maiden was convented before the court, for she alone had returned in defiance of orders, and at the sight of her fair face the water rose to many eyes. The chief Assistant asked: 'Are you willing to return home again?' to which she answered in a low, sweet tone, 'Sir, I have no home, nor any father save my Father which is in heaven.' Another of the Assistants then demanded that she be searched in relations to the doctrine which she held, so she was asked: 'Do you believe in justification by

that righteousness alone which Christ fulfilled in his person?' 'Alas, sir,' she replied, 'these things are too hard for me, too high for my understanding. I would not wrong any, I would not think unkindly of the least of God's creatures, nor hold my hand from doing good in charity, and love and humbleness of heart, without thought or hope of reward.' The Assistants conferred together; they could not send her back to England or to the Virginias, because the shipmasters would not receive her without a large premium, so they passed sentence that she should be conveyed in a cart, fifteen miles to the westward into the wilderness, and left there — which was done." It was incredible.

"Are these men to whom I gave the right hand of fellowship the same who perpetrated this awful wrong?" I exclaimed with an amazement not to be expressed.

"Not all of them; this happened not two weeks ago, and yet that magistracy has been depleted by death; and, strange to say, three of them have gone to their reward, in their own place, in this short time."

"These were truly enemies of mine, and I take pleasure in considering the latter end of those with whom I have contended, whether it be for good or evil."

"They have gone to their reward," Mr. Mayhew repeated, "and some have found in the manner of their taking off the judgement of God."

"This," I meditated aloud, "must have exhibited to the spectators a noble instance of the divine vengeance against hardened and daring men," and I took some comfort in the reflection. To rage against the persecutors of Beatrix was vain, since the worst of

them had gone to their own place, and it would serve no good purpose, had I slain them with my own hand.

"Has nothing been heard since of the hapless maiden?" I asked, anxious to know the worst.

"I only know that my serving man followed the cart; for several of us had formed the plan to give secret aid to the exile, until a better spirit should prevail. But he was warned away; and, when he came to the spot, he was unable to find any trace of her."

"What fate do you guess overtook her?" I asked, and got some comfort from his answer.

"It was the late summer time, a warm, clear air, and a leafy earth, with abundance of berries and roots, and fishes in the brooks, and she did not go away empty, nor wanting the means for fire, and other necessary things. I was permitted to see to that."

Captain Pratt was gone beyond recall. But my course was clear. I would say nothing to the magistrates. I had the nucleus of an army in my house. I had the treasure of the Covenant in Henry Cassils's strong room at my disposal. I had the promise of more of the Covenant's crew if no accident happened in the night. I would engage with them, and use their own forces to right the wrong which they had done. If I could make the Indian business agree with mine, as I hoped — well and good; if not — I would let the Indian business shift for itself.

Having adjured Mr. Mayhew to secrecy I left the house; and, walking homeward, framed the resolve to winnow the forest as on a threshing floor. The only danger I apprehended was that Beatrix had suffered violence at the hands of the Indians. The thought

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caused a yearning for a regiment of my old comrades, and, if any evil had befallen Beatrix, the savages would be to our swords as dried herbage, and there would be peace — the peace of death — from Canada to the Virginias.



CHAPTER XXX

As I took my way homeward, I heard a noise of shouting. A messenger came galloping across the Common from the Neck, crying that the Indians were in the field, slaying and burning. Before I reached my house the drums were beating, the trumpets crying, and everyone was running hither and thither.

Richard Thorpe and his companions were awaiting me. With them were Christopher Lea, and five more of the Covenant's crew. They had been put ashore down the coast near Scituate, in the early morning, which was proof that Captain Pratt had successfully weathered the dangers of the night. What happened to the king's ship I did not ask; for Captain Pratt disliked to be spied upon, and I desired to respect his habit of reticence. This, however, everyone knows—that ship never again appeared in the Massachusetts Bay.

I took the two men aside, and explained the business in hand: that we would raise a force of three companies of forty men each; that I would take the centre, and they the flanks; and, keeping in touch we should rend the Indian confederacy in twain, and sweeping westward should clear all as we went.

"Of what value is this sudden raid?" Christopher Lea demanded. "The enemy will close in upon our rear."

"The magistrates are alive. They will hold the North and South lines, and advancing in both directions will relieve us of pressure from behind."

"If we are to be in command of the flanks," Richard Thorpe enquired, "shall we be free to enlist our force? I like to approve of the weapon which is placed in my hand."

"You are under no orders but your own. You are free to requisition Henry Cassils for the treasure and arms, which he keeps in his strong room."

"That will cause a sore consumption of our hardearned savings," Christopher Lea objected. "This community was not over friendly to us, until its hour of need. Why then should we adventure the gains which we have made for its rescue?"

"This fighting of savages is a pretext," I felt bound to admit; "for there is a project which is near to my heart, and Captain Pratt is in full sympathy with it—the search for a maiden who is lost in the forest."

"This is a new enterprise for me, "said Thorpe. "I am afraid I should not know what to say to her, if I found her. I never had much dealings with women."

"That will be an easy matter," I said by way of consolation, "and he who finds her is a made man."

"I myself once rescued a maiden on the coast of Guinea," his companion objected, "and she became in time a sore trial to me."

The enthusiasm which the men developed was not great; but when I reminded them of their new authority, and the service which they would render, their hearts swelled with satisfaction. They sum-

moned their comrades; and, having explained the circumstances, all separated like a band of ravaging dogs to scour the community for volunteers who were to assemble at Henry Cassils's house.

The peril to the settlements was so grave that, by common consent, Boston became the headquarters for those whose duty, and necessity, made them resolute to adventure their lives in the defence of all. So, when I neared the Town Hall, there was a great concourse of people in the streets, and the drums were beating for volunteers. The magistrates were in session as I entered. Mr. Pendleton came forward with great good-nature. Even the Governor gave me a friendly greeting, and the Deputy was cordial to a degree. Mr. Mayhew had evidently disclosed something of my situation, and I found sympathy in every face, which gave me courage in my search, and resolution in the good cause to which I was committed.

When order was made, I arose to speak; but I was careful to make no mention of the event which had so distressed me, when last I stood there, though full knowledge of it was in the minds of all. I was accorded much esteem and favour, as I detailed my plan of operations, and they made me Chief Captain of the centre upon the spot. I obtained sanction for making Christopher Lea and Richard Thorpe captains, to proceed with me to the westward upon a sudden eruption, whilst they were to proceed to the North and the South as far as they could.

"For," said I, in conclusion, "this reminds me of the man who had a tree which was infested with rooks, and after resorting to various expedients he concluded that the surest way was to cut down the tree." At that moment the new-made captains entered, and reported to me that they could easily find men who were eager to adventure their lives, and so win promotion into the *Covenant*, if that were promised. I yielded readily to that easy condition. A council of war was promptly held with the magistrates. They agreed, and a public exercise upon the Common was ordered for the late afternoon.

At the hour appointed I made for Beacon Hill, and there found my two comrades with men enough to form three companies, with weapons in their hands, knapsacks at their backs, and in such an array of arms, and armour, as terrified the spectators. The forces raised by the authorities at their own charge were also there, and it was a pleasing sight — a fine array of troops, some in steel caps and buff coats, and a concourse of magistrates on horseback.

Being come into the field, the public leaders called their men into close order to go to prayer, and then gave them some exercise. Though the men were of stout heart it was lamentable to see how imperfect they were in their postures and motions. Then I was called upon to make some display of evolutions, and my throat was parched giving orders for movements which men with a leaven of discipline would have comprehended by their own intelligence. Yet the old joy came into my heart, with the rattle of the pieces, the tramp of men, and the warmth of a borrowed horse between my knees. It was a comfort to command once more. Being yet unready to take the field, we were summoned to meet in the morning at the Town

Hall, to receive a farewell, and it proved to be a busy night.

In the morning strange reports were abroad. It was told to me that, shortly after daybreak, it being then quite clear and sunshiny, several persons in Malden heard a great gun go off; and presently—if you believe what they say—the report of small guns discharging thickly, as if there were a battle. Bullets came singing over their heads. The sound of drums was heard passing westward, and invisible troops of horses were riding to and fro. The accounts of these strange prodigies, I confess, did not serve to increase my confidence.

At the hour appointed, all things having been accomplished as well as we could, I marched into the Town Hall at the head of my men. After a long service, during which many pleasant reflections were made, I was asked to say something, which I did, standing forth in front.

"We have taken the best measures we can for the peace and safety of these colonies," I began. "I am going upon an enterprise of some difficulty, and it may be of danger; yet we all hope for a good issue." Then the difficulty of my undertaking, and the uncertainty of my search for Beatrix came upon me with a new force, and my good temper forsook me utterly.

"When last I stood here," I cried, "you may have thought that I heard with displeasure of the things which had been done against peaceable, and peaceloving, men and women. Now I am strong, and willing to strike; and if any civilised being is molested or mishandled, or untenderly treated, I shall come again,

and what the barbarian savages may effect in plunder and rapine shall be as naught, compared with what, I swear by God and His book, I shall do to those who may be guilty of it."

This was a form of words which I had learned in my experience abroad, though I seldom employed it; but with the utterance a quiet and calm fell upon me. Waiting for no reply, and hearing no response, beyond that of Richard Thorpe who repeated in a firm voice, "Ay, ay!" I marched forth my men, and formed them into three companies.

When we were clear of the settlements about the Bay we plunged at once into the wilderness, and all thought of war was swallowed up in the search for Beatrix. I followed up the trail by which the cart had passed, until we came to the spot where she had been left, according to the report which was made to me by Mr. Mayhew's servant. He offered to procure for me the driver of the cart, but I could not prevail upon myself to talk with the sordid fellow. I examined the place, hoping to find some memorial of her presence, a broken twig, a bed of boughs upon which her form had rested, a trace of fire, a shred of clothing - that would have been the utmost of joy. But I discovered no sign which might indicate that any human being had passed that way, not even an Indian, and I took comfort in that.

All prudence forsook me. My passion, like a demon, drove me into the waste places. Gone were the lessons which I had learned in so dear a school. I had no thought for advanced or rear guards, for outposts or intrenchments. I sent every man upon his own

account to scour the forest for Beatrix Sherwyn, and many neglected to return. We lived as we could; and, instead of sleeping in a tent, it was a stone I had for a pillow; but about it grew dainty flowers, the heart's ease, the soul's cure, and the mind's rest. When I awoke in the morning I would leap to my feet, awake without the need of cold water from the brook; for who could tell that the sun of that day might not look upon Beatrix Sherwyn gathered to my arms? If I heard a deer crashing through the trees, or a fox rustling the leaves, or saw the flash of a partridge's wing, I thought I had found her. But I found her not.

The Indians are possessed of a superstition that those who shed the first blood will be conquered in the end. Therefore they were merely in a state of wariness against the time the drums should beat, and the trumpets sound. Even when we had taken the field, they were unwilling to stand the shock, but retreated ever to the westward. At length we found traces of their work in smoking ruins which had once been thriving settlements, and I knew that my search was at an end, for the savages had effectually scoured the forest. All hope of finding Beatrix had perished and had it not been for my men whom I had so wofully mishandled I should have been content to cast away my life in the wilderness which had absorbed hers.

I now turned my attention to the business of war. But it was too late. I was out of touch with either flank. My force was reduced to a score of men, and it was as difficult to find the enemy as to kill him when once discovered, as that fine soldier Julius Cæsar also learned. Yet I struck where I could, ever following

westward, the enemy enduring his losses, and adding fresh numbers to his strength. I was now fully come to myself and I had a complete apprehension of the difficulties into which my madness had landed me. The trees were bare, and winter was coming apace. Without shelter, and without food, I made such an experiment of cold, and wet, and hunger, as I had never known.

But we pushed on, till we reached the upper waters of the Connecticut River, and there the cold was worse, and the provision for withstanding it was grown less. My mind was working well again, and I saw that our only hope lay in descending the river, before the ice should form. To attempt a junction with Captain Pratt was a mad enterprise, for two hundred miles of crag and forest lay between us and the Hudson.

I have mentioned the difficulty which we experienced in discovering the main body of our foes; but they were no longer chargeable with elusiveness. We overtook the savage host upon the banks of a large stream which to this day is known as the "Bloody River," and there the great thing happened. It was without order in the doing, and cannot be related in any form of words which I might devise. Ahab found mules in the desert: we found devils.

I practised all the arts and devices which I knew. We intrenched ourselves—and we might as well have been in our graves. We sent out patrols—and the enemy was there in force. We advanced—and he was behind us. We retreated—he was again in the rear. We forded the river, and he was drawn up on the further bank. We crossed back again, and

there he was in front once more. Yet it was a comely fight; a fight of brave men with fierce, of the few against the many, in which all worked valiantly, and all of my company found an end, save myself and three of my comrades whose time I suppose was not yet come.

Yet, for those of us who remained the situation possessed no great comfort or hopefulness. We found ourselves stretched upon the earth, each bound hand and foot to four stakes which were well fixed in the ground. Truly we had been as safe in the nest of a cockatrice. We were alone, and had some conversation which was not inspiriting, though we found some mercy in that we were for the most part unwounded. Toward nightfall we heard a crackling in the trees, and our captors came within our vision.

So well as we could see, a conference was about to be held. It was so; for one spoke first, then another, according to their degree. And since the younger are in obedience to the elder, and the elder to the devil, it was easy to guess what good was like to come from their deliberations. From my place I could see nothing save the stars which looked down blindly upon my misery. But I could hear, and understand, much of what was said, for I had learned some parts of the Mohawk language the previous spring-time in the forest. I cannot say, however, that what I heard was very full of promise. Certainly I understood the sound of steel upon steel, as the savages clashed, and sharpened, their knives.

My bonds were loosened, and as I arose stiff and sore, I had the grief to behold one of the seamen who

had come out of the Ripple pierced like the poor man in the twelve signs of the Almanac, and John Diamond, or so much as remained of him, lashed to a tree. The debate went on, and I was left to survey the scene. There were not more than six savages in the crew, and all were naked, save for loose skins of beasts, which were tied about their waists. The one who appeared to be the chief wore a long robe of beaver skin which trailed upon the ground, and on his head were the horns of a young bull, with a red feather drooping from a tall ridge of hair which looked like the crest of a cock. The next had leathern breeches fringed with scalp locks, and his lank tresses were bedecked with the plumage of an eagle.

One young savage I noted well, though the glare of the fire was in my eyes. His face was painted red. with white and black spots; his naked body was crimson, and his neck blue: his breast was bedaubed with figures of various sorts of animals; his arms were behung with bracelets, and in either ear was a bird's This swarthy fellow was closest to the fire, and in spite of the marks of the Beast which he bore. I recognised him for the young Iroquois whom I had entertained so kindly in the forest of the Narragansetts. In my heart I named him Judas. I looked fixedly in his painted face, but he gave no sign. debate went on in the most leisurely fashion. The ministers of Boston could not have been more deliberate: but in the end I knew that I was in a great hazard of finishing my days. Nothing was to be gained by silence, so I addressed Judas across the fire with all the boldness which I could summon.

"Have you forgotten the days when you eat my bread, and shared the shelter of my hut in the country of the Narragansetts?" I spoke in French, a language which he knew, and he answered me promptly in the same tongue.

"I have not forgotten. You are the sorcerer who your companions declared had raised them from the dead; but I do not believe it."

"I am willing to put the matter to the test," said I, "if you will lend your body for the trial." The Indians manifested some surprise that we understood each other, and they demanded to know the subject of our conversation.

"I too am a great sorcerer," continued I, speaking as well as I could in their tongue, "and am willing to make proof that my power is greater than his." This offer created much interest, for savages dearly love a miracle; and they lent me some credit, because I spoke in divers tongues. Judas showed uneasiness, for he was partly convinced of my capacity.

"His past life is clear to me," I continued, addressing the Sachem, and I proceeded with signs and words to relate how he went down the river pretending to collect tribute, but in reality to secure allies for this great uprising; how a great sickness had come upon the Narragansetts; how he had been kindly entertained by the son of the Great Spirit; and I mentioned many trivial incidents of our stay in the forest. The Indians had heard all these things from their emissary, for they are great gossips; and because I could relate the past, they inferred that I could foretell the future. "I am not denying that he is a sorcerer." I went on.

finding some pleasure in the play. "He has learned much from me; but I will show you greater things, and I have made to him the proposal that I should attempt to raise him from the dead."

Judas protested promptly that he would not lend himself to the experiment; but when I affirmed that if I did not succeed I would yield my life as forfeit, his companions regarded him with looks which must have caused him some embarrassment.

"Who can be better spared?" I cried. "This is no warrior. He is but a diviner, and a maker of mischief. If you grasp him by the gorge, and slip a knife in the slot of his breast behind the bone, and turn it about till you find his heart, he will fall dead. Then you will bury him in the earth, and leave us alone for three days, and three nights. You shall see if I speak truth, or not."

The chief laughed once. He turned to his companions, and conferred with them in tones which I could not hear, but it was evident that they relished the jest. Judas grew uneasy, and fingered his knife. There was nothing for it. I was unarmed. My strength was near spent, else I would have leaped upon him, and strangled him with my hands. I stood where I was, unmoved save for a slight swaying of the body, on account of a weakness which was coming over me. Of a sudden he seized his knife by the blade, and projected it with full force against my body. To my great comfort I was wearing a chain shirt below my doublet, and the steel rang upon the steel like a flail upon the threshing-floor. The clash of iron drew the attention of the warriors, and they were in time to see the knife

fall helpless to the ground. I bent down and took the weapon in my hand. I handed it to the chief.

"Examine this knife," I said to him sweetly. "Can you not see that it is but as the needle of the pine? Are your eyes covered with the scales of the sturgeon? Are your ears stopped with the gum of the fir tree? Can you not see, can you not hear that I am in very truth the son of the Great Spirit?"

"The Sun is our Father: the Earth is our Mother," replied the chief who was a serious fellow. "This thing is new to me;" and he drew back a pace.

This play-acting was sapping my strength, and Judas saw it. Fear for his life, and pride in his profession, came to his rescue. A brass kettle was slung over the coals, and it was filled with molten lead for the making of bullets, bubbling and boiling like a witches' cauldron. In a passion of fury he leaped upon me, and drew me to the fire. I looked with pity upon my poor right hand, as he seized the arm, and thrust it into the molten mass. Then an exquisite strange thing happened. I was like the three men in the fiery furnace, which had been heated seven times more than its wont. Not a hair of my hand was singed.

At the moment I did not pause to consider of it; but I have since read in the writings of that pregnant-witted man, Robert Boyle, that this is one of the natural endowments of superheated metals, not to burn the flesh by reason of the envelope of air which surrounds it. I protest that I do not commit myself to so material a view. I say that this was no time for reflecting upon the event; I was too busy in profiting by it. Upon the instant, I scooped out so much of

the molten mass as filled the hollow of my hand, and dashed it with all my force into the painted face.

The young Iroquois leaped backwards, in blindness and pain, and fled into the outer darkness of the forest with horrid shrieks. His companions stood with fear in their faces, and could not stir. Their hearts were turned to water.

"I will be your guide," I said. "I shall lead you into sweet fields where the sun shines, and the water runs amongst the trees. Is it peace?"

"It is peace," the chief replied, in wonder and humility.

"Peace then let it be. Else shall you eat of serpents, and your way shall be the way of dogs. But leave me alone for a little," and I was alone.

I had deceived these poor heathens. I did not deceive myself. Once their fear and astonishment had passed, they would quickly return, like beasts which were robbed of their prey. But I must have rest. I had forgotten my companions who were yet outstretched upon the earth, till I was reminded of their presence by voices which came from the ground.

"If this play-acting is over, I should like to go home," said one.

"This humble rôle of captive suits me ill enough," said another.

"The sin of the play-house," I protested, "lies in the pleasure to the spectators; therefore I hold myself guiltless."

"Play-acting is an evil thing," my companions agreed as they arose from the ground, when I had cut the withes which bound them. They were scarcely able

to do more than stand upright, yet there was no time to lose. I assisted them to the banks of the river, and there we found one frail craft. I placed in it such weapons as were at hand, and launched it forth upon the stream. I helped the weakest of my comrades into the fragile skiff. I pushed it off, and another was allowed to enter; then the third. As I stepped on board the canoe sank to the gunwale, and it would have gone to the bottom, had I not scrambled into the water. I pushed it out in the stream, and as the eddy caught the prow, I charged my brave fellows to do the best they could for themselves. They gave me a feeble farewell, and vanished in the darkness, leaving me waist deep, and alone in the chill water.

My only safety lay in flight, before the savages returned, as they surely would. But whither should I fly? I waded ashore, and made the best speed I could down the river, till at length overcome with weariness I lav me down, till strength and light should come. When the moon arose, I left the river, and proceeded inland through the wilderness. I encountered the unburied carcasses of two or three Indians, so that I knew I was not beyond the sphere of our operations. I plunged into a miserable swamp, and then passed through a thicket of fallen trees. I ascended a steep mountain. hoping to have a view of the surrounding country in the morning. From the summit I perceived a low valley traversed by a brook with stately trees on either side, and over all loomed the dark sky, with a faint glimmer of the morning in the East. In the middle of this valley fires were gleaming.



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It was the main camp of the savage host, silent and drunken with blood; and, I suppose, with French brandy. I fled down the reverse slope, with no other plan than flight, caring only to escape from these relentless foes.



CHAPTER XXXI

I AWOKE from sleep, and it was full day. My clothes were wet with frost, and I was chilled to the marrow of my bones. The last leaves were pattering to the ground, and almost covered me, where I lay. Backward upon the hills, the trees stood naked against the azure sky. In front, I discovered water glancing through the openings of the forest, and I heard a river rushing over the stones. I made my way to the bank, and found that it was a considerable stream which ran deep and clear. I washed my face in the cool water, and adjusted my clothing which soon began to dry in the sun, and the free air. If only I could have some food, I should be cheerful enough.

By the providence of God I saw a partridge upon a low-hanging bough, and with the stroke of a stick I brought her to the ground. In defiance of all caution I lit a fire of bark and twigs; and, wrapping the bird in a mass of clay, I placed it upon the coals to bake. When I could endure the pangs of hunger no longer, I broke the caked clay which took away the feathers with it, and left the bird intact with all its juices. The savour filled the air, and I eat till I was satisfied. Then I pulled my pipe from its pouch, and sat down by the water's edge, the most comfortable man in the world.

I had not yet begun to speculate upon my future

course, when I saw a canoe come whirling down the river. As it drew nearer, I noticed that a man lay at the bottom, as if he were dead. I gave a low call, and he raised his head above the gunwale. It was Judas, the young Iroquois, and he was bound about the brows with the skin of a serpent. I called again. He turned his sightless face in the direction of the sound, and whined with fear. I spoke kindly to him, and he worked his craft towards the shore. I entered it, and he crouched upon the bottom. I pushed off; and, as we went drifting down the river, I enquired of his pain. He said in reply that he had some sanative drugs which gave him ease. I expressed my sorrow over the violence which I was compelled to exercise, and he acknowledged that he had brought it upon himself. I reminded him of the happy days which we had spent together in the country of the Narragansetts, with so good an effect that, I believe, tears would have come into his eyes, if he had had any. I had won his heart, and he was willing to tell me all which he knew.

"There was a great project afoot," he said, "when I met you in the country of the Narragansetts. I was striving to unite all the tribes in a common adventure with our Five Nations."

"Against whom?"

"Against the English of New England, and the French of Canada."

"What part did your teachers, the Jesuits, play in this design?"

"Father Janselme, the missionary to the Mohawks, was himself deceived. He thought that this great

confederacy was only for the sake of a general treaty of peace with the French."

"What did he propose in relation to the settlements of New England?"

"He said nothing of them, save that we could deal with that proposition at our leisure."

"In peace or in war?" I cried.

"That would depend on the circumstances which might arise."

"You have then been a great traveller," I said.

"Often have I lain in the edge of the forest, counting the lights which shone from the windows of Boston; and I have traversed every path between this and the Bay of Massachusetts. Indeed, I am newly returned from that place."

"In your wanderings in the forest," I asked with a sudden stillness at my heart, "did you hear of any white maiden who was lost from her own?"

"I captured a white maiden with my own hand; and I hoped to have a hundred crowns, if I could deliver her at Fort Orange on the Hudson."

"Was she in distress? Were you kind to her?" I demanded.

"White women are worth a hundred crowns in gold: so it is like I used her tenderly."

"Was her name Beatrix? Was it Sherwyn?"

"She did not tell me."

"Was she tall, dark-eyed, brown-haired, of a sweet spirit and generous countenance?"

"I cannot tell. White women all look alike to me. But I think she was worth a hundred crowns."

"Where is she now?" I cried, leaping to my feet,

and almost oversetting the canoe. Judas in his fear and blindness cowered at the bottom.

"I do not know," he whimpered. "She was worth a hundred crowns; but if you find her, she is freely yours."

"Did you have speech with her?" I asked.

"The maiden was afraid. We journeyed together, mostly in silence. I procured food, and built shelter; and it was not until many days had passed that I discovered she could speak in the French tongue."

"Did she not then explain how it was that she was wandering alone in the forest?"

"She told me nothing."

"This maiden, I believe, is one who is more dear to me than my own life. If you tell me all you know, I shall pay you the hundred crowns, and do what I can to lighten the punishment which I was compelled to bring upon you."

Thereupon, I plied him with questions; but at heart he was an honest fellow, and would not say the thing which was not, even for the sake of pleasing me. He could only repeat that he had discovered this treasure not far from the New England borders, and conducted her to a camp of his women which was making its way into the country of the Mohawks, at the head waters of the Hudson

"Do you guess that they reached their destination?"

"I cannot tell; and I fear that I cannot find the place," he said as he put his fingers to his blind eyes.

"Where are we now?" I asked.

"This is the Connecticut River. The Ashuelot falls into it from the West. We should be near its

mouth. There is a camp upon the upper reaches of the Ashuelot. I believe, if we could find that spot, we could then journey to the main refuge of my women. Then I would have my hundred crowns."

I seized the paddle and struck down stream, as if every stroke brought me that much nearer to Beatrix. As I wrought at the clumsy oar, my mind grew clear. This maiden whom Judas had found could be none other than Beatrix; for maidens are a rare commodity in the forest. He had left her amongst the women who were journeying for safety far to the westward. A friendly camp was near at hand; and if we could find it, we might attempt to join the main body in which Beatrix was concealed.

The ardour of my mind, the heightening sun, and the exercise of the paddle brought warmth and cheerfulness, and Judas caught something of my spirit. About noon, when I began to feel the need of food and rest, the canoe was drawn, as if by some invisible force, to the western bank, and then shot out into the stream. I searched for the cause, and presently observed through the trees the wide opening of a descending river. I mentioned the matter to Judas. He enquired for certain marks. I sought them eagerly, and reported what I saw. Then he assured me that this was the Ashuelot River, and we went ashore in the bay, and lit a fire. With no great trouble I found a hare and two birds; for I now was free to discharge a gun without fear of arousing hidden foes, and we made a comfortable meal. The past was vanishing, and the future was full of hope for me. But Judas fell into a lowness of spirits again; and I thought that I understood his feelings.

"My good work has failed," he confessed, "the labour of years, and now I am returning to spend my life in a camp of women."

"And how has it failed?" I asked, anxious to gain intelligence of the public affairs in which I had set out so gaily.

"We have been defeated in every quarter; in the South—the Narragansetts." In this I thought I saw the hand of Richard Thorpe. "In the North—the Abenaki, the Tarrantines and the Malicites." Christopher Lea had done his work, and I only had failed.

"Why then did not the western tribes come to the rescue?"

"They had trouble enough on their hands. A new enemy appeared from the South, with moving forts, and great guns on wheels. The Mohawks are scattered like chips from the axe."

"Did you not hear who was the leader of this band from the South?" I asked, thinking I was getting to the root of the matter at last.

"We call him by a name which means, 'bitter and silent,' but I never set eyes on him, and do not know."

"Then is your work completed in very truth," I cried. "I shall answer for the English on the coast, and for this enemy from the South. You shall speak for the Iroquois, and the tribes about New England. Father Janselme will represent the French, and we shall all go before the two great kings, and make a peace which shall prevail through all these regions. It will be peace instead of war." With this vainglorious talk I eased his mind into contentment again.

"Are you not afraid to meet this great enemy from

. . .

the South," Judas asked, as we took our places in the canoe once more.

"On the contrary. If he is whom I think, I shall take him by the hand. We shall smile in each other's eyes; and, if this maiden be found, we shall proceed in happiness all our days."

I toiled against the stream. The air grew cold, and flakes of ice began to fall. I described the river banks to Judas, and he said that we should soon be there. Toward nightfall he grew restless, and enquired for any signs of human habitation.

"For," said he, "I fear the report of danger has driven them further up the river, and we shall both perish."

At length I discovered the light of fires, and we went ashore. It was a camp of women of the Mohawk tribe; but it was not that which we sought, and it was bootless to ask if Beatrix were there. Little had I thought that it would ever be my chiefest desire to cast myself down amongst the filthy brood of Adam's degenerate seed. But so it was, and I slept till morning. As I arose, and looked abroad, the snow was yet falling, and the wigwams of bark stood out white against the gloomy background of trees. When I examined the situation. I found half a score of feeble men. as many women, more children and a rabble of dogs, and all but the dogs were dying quite contentedly. I bade Judas urge his people to be of good courage, and that I should lead them to a place where they would find food. They appeared to believe me, and abandoned their intention of dying. They commenced preparations for a long journey, making snowshoes, and sledges, and mending clothes.

I went into the forest, and day after day was diligent in procuring food, notably a belated bear, and a fat deer. The women of the camp were experts in dealing with these beasts. They cut the deer in pieces, and hung them upon trees in the cold air, beyond the reach of dogs; they tried out the oil from the bear, seasoned it with sassafras, and wild cinnamon, and placed it in jars. They cut the flesh in morsels, and having barbecued it upon suckers of the sweet-tasting hick-ory, all eat to their full contentment. At first I had as soon eat the spare rib of a wolf, but by the help of a good appetite which my exercise procured, I found it a pleasing dish. When it was flavoured with young tops of poke weed, it proved very grateful to a whole-some stomach.

With abundance of nutritious food our spirits revived; and at length we were able to start in search of the main encampment. I had lost the reckoning of the days, but it must have been well in the New Year when I took to the frozen river at the head of my feeble company. With snowshoes upon my feet, with a gun in my mittened hand, a knife and hatchet at my belt, a pouch of tobacco with a pipe in a case about my neck, and a pack of food and blanket upon my shoulders, I believe that I cut no ill figure, as I strode along, and I found not a little encouragement in the nimble air, and the solemn splendour of the winter scene.

About noon the sun looked out between his cloudy prison bars, and we threw down our loads. The women slung the kettles, whilst the men went into the woods with axes to cut birch trees for the fire. After refreshing ourselves we held our course again; and before the night fell we had travelled a good space. The men disdained to work at providing shelter for the night, so I told them that they should sleep in the open. I believe this was the first lesson in industry which they had ever received; and they fell to with vigour. They cut down birch saplings, and cleared away the snow; then planting the poles, they spread over them sheets of birch bark, and completed the door with the skin of a bear. There was no great comfort, and I lay miserably enough, coiled up like a hedgehog, the flame from the pine knots burning my face, the icy air freezing my back, and the smoke in my eyes turning everything which I saw into blood.

That night I had a taste of what the poor man Pharaoh had to endure, though my plagues were not ten but only three — a plague of smoke, a plague of dogs, and a plague of bitter cold. Also, the three following things are yet strange to me: why men who are to spend the next world in fire should be so fond of smoke in this; why men who are themselves no better than Christian dogs should seek the society of beasts; why feeling men do not build some reasonable habitation against the frost.

At length we came to the falling in of the Black River, and commenced its ascent. We toiled on over snow and ice till we reached its source. The village toward which we were journeying lay across a hideous range of mountains, and it was long debated between Judas and me whether we should not encamp where we were till the Spring. In the end we decided to push on, if we could, and so took to the rough hill-side.

Day after day we passed in desolation and solitude, making a few miserable miles over frozen streams and rocks, clambering over fallen trees, and resting for a moment on their trunks. When it seemed as if we could endure it no longer, Judas became much animated, and turned his bandaged face now in one direction, and then another, as if there were a familiar feeling to the winter winds which blew in that wilderness. Having come to a fearful gorge, we plunged into the ravine, till its shadows were swallowed up in the darkness of the approaching night, and Judas seized me by the arm.

"I think that this should be the place," he said. "Give me your hand," and he all but dragged me after him, until we turned the corner of a jagged mass of rock.

"Do you see fires?" he cried in savage hope.

I peered through the trees, and observed a dull glimmer of light in the frosty air; but before I could answer, the barking of dogs came up the valley, and Judas knew that he had reached his journey's end.

The clamour brought our party at a run; and men, women, and dogs went streaming down the valley to where warmth, and food, and companionship were in store for them. I alone held back. For the first time in my life, as far as I can remember, my courage failed. I do not know how long it was before Judas returned, but at length he came, slowly feeling his path.

"She whom you seek was safely here for the most part of the winter; but a white Captain with a band of strange warriors broke into the lodge, and carried her away to the westward." That was his message. If this white captain were Phineas Pratt: well and good. If some renegade — my mind refused to dwell upon the thought.

"Lead me to your lodge," I said, "and let me question your people."

"I shall direct you not to mine, but to her lodge; for she had one to herself, and there you may question my women, and old men, one by one."

So the faithful fellow, and one of his companions, conducted me down the valley, into a comfortable wigwam, and there I cast myself upon the very couch which had known the dear form of Beatrix. I searched the humble dwelling — but in vain — for some trace of her occupancy, hoping to find a shred of clothing, or it might be a letter scrawled upon a piece of bark.

"This is a lodge of squaws and old men," said Judas, "and now I am one of them."

He went out, and returned presently, bringing a female whom he called his wife, and an ancient man whose truthfulness I hoped would be as great as his years. Their account was hard to come at; for they talked in figures, and my knowledge of the language was small. Judas interpreted for me; but there was little matter in their words. After much persuasion, the woman took up the relation from the time Judas had entrusted the maiden to her at a point which, I judged, was near the Connecticut River. They journeyed westward in a leisurely manner, she said, and were being joined continually by wounded warriors. The snow had fallen before they reached their present situation, but they had spent the winter comfortably, and the maiden was in good health.

I asked many questions — how she spent the time, if she were happy, if she laughed. The woman replied that she busied herself with tending the wounded and the sick, in learning the language, in teaching and nursing the children; so that by dint of much enquiry I was able to reconstruct the life which she had spent amongst

these strange people. Then the old man told his story: that one night they were aware of the presence of an enemy circling about the hills; that there was a fearful sound, and a ball of fire came plunging into the camp.

"Then," the ancient man continued, "the warriors broke into the camp, and there was much laughter when they discovered that it contained only women, and old, or useless men." I pressed him closely as to what had occurred between the leader of the band and the maiden, but his account was, if anything, more unsatisfactory. Stripped of all words it amounted to this: that the leader met the captive in the door of her tent.

"Was she afraid?" I asked quickly, and could scarcely wait for the interpretation of his reply.

"For a moment only. Then the leader called her by a name which did not appear to be hers."

"What name? Was it Beatrix?" I cried, but the old man shook his silly head, and said it was not.

"Did they talk together? What language did they employ?" I asked again; but Judas had to confess that the old man did not know.

"Ask him if it was English?" I persisted, and the reply came that it was not French.

"Is this all which he can tell?" I demanded yet more persistently.

"He only says that the man might have been one of her own tribe, and I have lost my hundred crowns," Judas lamented bitterly.

"Why one of her own tribe?" I cried in fresh perplexity.

"Because he gathered her in his arms, and touched his lips to her face."



CHAPTER XXXII

Ir the days were short, the nights were long. I eat the food which was brought to me. I smoked my pipe. I slept by night, and scarcely stirred abroad by day. After my years of labour in a cause which was not mine by nature, after my months of hardships in a mad adventure of search for a woman whom I had but twice seen, I was content to rest. I was willing to end my life, an outcast amongst these natural men of the forest. With this slothfulness of body there came a complete lowness of spirits. It seemed as if God had withdrawn His face from me, and that in very truth I was accursed.

Anger and hatred entered into my heart, against my king who had declared me false, against my country which had cast me into exile, against my friends who had denied me, against Beatrix — God forgive me — who had led me into my present misery. If this were Beatrix who had been rescued by the wandering Iroquois, who had passed the winter in this very tent, who had accompanied the strange leader of marauding savages in trust and honour — even if he were Phineas Pratt — then I was betrayed.

In the confused welter of the past year-and-a-half since I sailed from the Cowes in the Covenant, I could see naught but his concern about the events which fell out in the Alderman's house; his interest in my meet-

ing with Captain Sherwyn in the forest; the abandonment of his design against the Spaniard, and of his search for treasure; his return to Massachusetts Bay; and his hurried departure for the Virginias, whilst I was sent to wander in the wilderness, and it might be lose my life. If this were not Beatrix, then she was dead, and all occasion for my living had passed. I turned my face to the wall, and agreed in my heart that I was forsaken.

But, at length, the frost ceased to bind. The winds softened. The snow began to melt. The lake cracked and heaved. The streams began to run in their accustomed places, and the trees to yield their sweet juice. One morning when I had gone abroad and climbed a sunny bank, I found a white flower thrusting up its head between the snows. I plucked it, and my hand was stained with the blood-red juice of its bitter root. The thing had a meaning. My evil mood passed away, and in that moment I had a sweet taste of the goodness of God.

Judas was mounting the warm hill-side, walking with more than his usual resolution. Joy was in his countenance, as he informed me that there was a small glimmer of light in one of his eyes. I drew him to my side, and all but kissed the poor blind face to which sight was returning. Then I knew that the evil spirit had passed from me. Together we sat in the sun, and he was like a brother to me.

He shook off the burden of restraint under which he laboured, whilst I had been possessed. With fresh enthusiasm he opened up the matter of a general peace in all those regions; and, if he had proposed an *entente* cordiale, a truce, or a formal treaty of peace with the evil

one, I believe that I should have yielded a ready assent, so sweet was my temper. He had meditated long upon the business. He spoke like a statesman, and his plans were well laid. He proposed that we should journey to the head waters of Lake Champlain, in the hope of finding his ally who had promised to remain in that region, until he should hear the results of the embassy to the tribes of New England, and there discuss the project with him. If nothing came of it, my way was open to Fort Orange, or Schenectady, and the Hudson, or to the St. Lawrence and the French settlements.

The country to the North and West was open, and after due conference we set out for the head waters of Lake Champlain. Judas and six of the sturdiest of his companions accompanied. His sight improved daily, and we made good progress. I was adventuring upon a new life. The great project which the savage statesman had instilled into my mind held first place, and drove out all matters of personal concern, even my search for Beatrix, and the reunion with Captain Pratt. Indeed, their pursuit now seemed but a vain and foolish endeavour.

One soft spring evening when we had pitched our camp, and eaten our frugal meal, I climbed a hill to take the view. From its summit I beheld the waters of the great lake glowing in the evening light, and from its edge a thin smoke curled up. Creeping on all fours, I gained a good view of the camp from which the smoke arose. I discovered that it was composed of Iroquois to the number of a score; and I was overcome with astonishment to behold, seated in the midst, a black son of the Scarlet Woman. Though I had not seen one

since the Restoration of Evil, I recognised him by his garb.

I lay long regarding him, and I confess to some joy at seeing again a white face, even if his garb and heart were black. As the evening grew to night, I came nearer in order to have speech with him. I had no fear; for Judas, his ally, was in my company; and, if this were not enough, I had but to discharge my piece and my followers would rush over the hill.

Presently the Jesuit arose, and drew a book from his pocket. He proceeded to read, and as he read, he mounted the hill towards the thicket where I lay concealed. As he approached, I regarded him curiously. The swarthiness of his skin surprised me on a man who was white by birth, and by profession a Christian. I judged that it arose in part from exposure to the sun and wind, and in part from his continually regarding men of darker hue; as Jacob's cattle were piebald through their dams having the peeled rods in their sight. His dress also was simple, like that of the patriarchal age in which men seem to have had an aversion to wearing breeches.

I arose in his path and assumed a respectful attitude. I kept silence, for I was not skilled in the vernacular of the approach. My surprise was great when he saluted me graciously in the English tongue. Early as it was, the bodies of the savages were fettered in sleep, and we withdrew a space into the forest; but, through force of habit, I kept my hand upon my sword in a careless manner, and the butt of a pistol convenient to the heel of my fist. We seated ourselves upon the trunk of a fallen tree, and my tongue continued rebellious.





FATHER JANSELME



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THE VINE OF SIBMAH

"I perceive that you are a Jesuit," was all which I could say.

"I am one of those unworthy servants," the priest replied.

"Unworthy I have always heard," said I. "Why then do you continue to serve the Lord unworthily, seeing that he has revealed himself in his written word, and to some degree in the preaching of it."

"I am old," the reverend man answered gently, "and have learned many things."

"You have not yet learned that there is a wisdom which is worse than foolishness. You have taken into your hands the implements of earthly power, and worldly politics. You have not learned to trust only to the sword of the spirit, which alone is powerful to set up the kingdom of God."

"Pater noster qui es in calis," the Jesuit murmured, making the sign of the cross. The darkness had fallen and the day was done.

"I thought that, though you were nurtured in the Popish Church, you might in the wilderness have abjured her errors; but I see by this idolatrous sign that you have not come out of her."

"Errors, my brother, are in the human mind; there are many channels to the heart of God."

"There is but one door," I said with some heat, "and he who climbs up any other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

"You are but repeating what you do not understand," he said.

"I have the authority of Scripture for it."

"Let us not speak of authority; it would be hard for

you to understand why the authority of a book is lower than the authority of the church. God give you peace," continued the Jesuit, lifting his hand in benediction, and in the dim light I beheld a piteous, and horrible thing. His poor hand was marred and distorted; the joint of the thumb was gone, and the fingers extended to the wrist bone.

"Sir," I said in humility, "you, like myself, have had your habitation amongst the owls of the desert, and have been sore mishandled by the fiends which live with them. I, too, have suffered the last things."

The venerable priest fell into silent devotion and I also put up a small prayer from my own heart. For such purposes I had been used to retire to my closet, yet I believe it was none the less effectual in the open forest. Truly this was a strange pass, a man like myself side by side on the trunk of a tree with a professed Jesuit, and both worshipping God in prayer.

"You are moved by the things of the flesh," said the priest, when his devotions were at an end, "and you deride the things of the spirit."

"That is but my manner of speech," I said, in shame that one should be compelled to take refuge from me in the peace of devotion.

"Your speech betrays a poorness of spirit, and a hardness of heart," the priest said by way of rebuke.

"That is our way in New England. I would not willingly give you pain."

"Ah! New England!" he said. "When I have good leisure, I am determined to come into those parts to teach your countrymen the true knowledge of God. If I do not come, hold me blameless, for life may not

endure. I suffer the chastisement of a wasting and bloody cough."

"I profess my sorrow at this indisposition of your health," said I with more civility.

"My health! You consider yourself a Puritan, and yet you are concerned about the body," he protested, and laid his poor hand upon my shoulder. "To be a Puritan is to seek refuge in the Spirit, to feel the immediacy of God without the intervention of the bodily senses."

"I am a Puritan, but not an ascetic. I take pleasure in the revelation which the senses make, but I hold all in due subordination to the things of God."

"Yet, you are unhappy. The only joy is in complete surrender, in full obedience," the priest replied with yearning in his voice.

"I fear that I am not yet prepared for a melancholy life."

"You call my life melancholy, because my joys are not your joys. The mere thought of the glories of eternity has in it more joy than is to be found in all worldly possession and achievement."

"I do find some pleasure in this contemplation," I declared.

"Then give free rein to your desire for holiness. Contemplate the blackness of this life against the blazing background of eternity. Put this world under your feet, and happiness will come."

"True, I have not yet acquired a weanedness from the things of the world. I love the light, and the movement of it. I love my fellow men and women."

"I would not have you abandon love of these. Be on

good terms with all things; with the birds which fly; with the flowers which bloom; with the raindrops which fall; with the sun, the wind, the water, the fire, which are our brothers; with the earth which is our mother, and our sister Death."

The sympathy in the voice and manner of the priest was so subtle that I opened my heart, and confessed. I acknowledged my love, and search, for Beatrix, which, with the confession of it, burst into a full flame of splendour; and I told him that this was the cause of my presence in the wilderness, and of the trials which I had encountered.

"I myself was once not wholly insensible to the sting of worldly desire," the venerable man declared, as if he in turn were making his confession to me. "You are but young yet, and I am not blaming you as I blame myself. Even yet I am possessed of my own ambition. I am waiting here with a small embassy from the Five Nations, until a messenger arrives from the tribes of New England, and I have the large design to proceed to Quebec to effect a treaty of peace with my countrymen."

"It would be a great proposition to unite all the tribes between this and New England, and embrace them in the bonds of amity."

"That was once my dream, and the realisation of it was in sight; but instead of turning westward in peace, the tribes marched eastward in war."

"That we well know in New England; but I think we have broken the back of the confederacy."

"Some rumours of this disaster have reached me; but they brought it upon themselves, and they have involved all these western tribes in the same disaster.



"If then," said I, "they have been reduced to obedience, the conditions for a general peace are the more favourable."

"True; and now by your aid, we shall win the assent of your countrymen. Join yourself with me. Speak for the settlements of Massachusetts, and together we shall embrace in the bonds of peace all, both red and white, who inhabit between the Great Lakes and the sea, and upon the borders of the River. Would that my messenger should return."

"I think I can tell you where he is to be found."

"This rejoices me greatly," cried the priest with outstretched hand; "for we are sore pressed by a band of Pequots, come, I know not how, from the South, and led by a man of hardihood and valour."

"Do you know his name?' I asked with a great hope in my heart.

"I only know that the natives call him by a term which signifies 'bitter and silent."

"Where is he now?" I cried, in wonder that the thing had come to pass.

"He is not four days from here, on the shores of Lake Sacrament. That is why I would make speed."

"There is no need for haste. This man is as a brother to me, and we shall all be friends."

"Great is the power and goodness of God," cried the Jesuit with uplifted hands, "that He has guided us to this happy issue."

In my heart I knew that the leader of this strange band of Pequots was Captain Pratt, that he had assembled them on the southern coast, and transported them up the Hudson in the *Covenant*. He had not, then, sailed to the Virginias, and he knew before leaving Boston, on that memorable night when he encountered the king's ship, that Beatrix had been cast out into the wilderness. He also was in search of her, and the suspicion grew to a certainty that it was he who had broken into the camp of women and carried her off. A new flame of desire arose in my heart with the thought that he was within four days of me, and that Beatrix might be in his company. The Jesuit's talk of heaven, and water, and birds, and death, was swallowed up in the full tide of my love, which went out to Beatrix. Earth and heaven were where she was.

"I have a thought in my poor head," said the priest. Then he fell into contemplation. "I am compelled to disclose it." He was like a man who argued with himself. "I hoped to wean you from the world. Yet, it is not for me to decide."

"Is it about me and this maiden that you are distressed?" I asked in hope and fear for what he would reply. I felt in the darkness for his hand, and we sat side by side upon the forest tree.

"Certainly there is a maiden with this strange man, and he yields her much honour. She occupies a lodge of her own, and several of my people have seen her as she walked abroad."

"Have you yourself beheld her?"

"Not with these eyes; but a marvellous account reaches me of the splendour of her beauty, and the vigour of her youth." The priest stopped of a sudden and made the sacred sign.

"What of the messenger whom I am expecting from

the New England tribes?" he asked in a tone from which all warmth had departed.

"He awaits behind yonder hill."

"Then, he is of your party. This passes my know-ledge."

"He and I are grown together in friendship, though I was compelled to do him much evil." Then I told the priest of my chance encounters with Judas the previous spring-time in the country of the Narragansetts, and of our second meeting amidst the dangers of war. I chose to withhold the circumstances under which he was stricken with blindness, though I mentioned the fact that his sight was slowly returning. When this relation was at an end, we heard soft steps amongst the trees, It was Judas and one of his companions who had come in search of me. As they approached, the priest spoke kindly to them, and at the sound of his voice Judas cried aloud:

"Father Janselme!"

He stumbled along, and, when he came to where we sat, he cast himself down at the feet of the priest. Father Janselme placed his hand upon the head of his disciple, uttering holy words, and raising him up, he invited him to a seat by his side. The joy of the poor savage was something to see. He was like a dog which hears his master's voice. We sat together upon that decayed tree, I know not how far into the spring-time night, whilst Judas poured forth his tale. He spoke in the Iroquois tongue, and very fast at that, so I was at a loss to understand all which he said. Indeed I was at no pains to listen, for my thoughts were otherwise engaged, until the recital was at an end.

"My son," Father Janselme turning to me said sweetly, "you have had a great trial of patience. You will have no rest till it is accomplished. Do you seek out this friend of yours. I shall remain where I am until you return."

"I shall do my part," I assured him, "and if I do not return within a reasonable time, you may know that my friend has business elsewhere. But be assured of this: you need apprehend no danger from the South. Not war, but the finding of this maiden, was our chief concern."

We arose, and as he turned to descend the hill, he raised his hand in benediction: "I am rejoiced in my spirit to have had speech with you. You are not far from the kindgom of God. I commend you to His care. May His goodness and mercy follow you." Then the feeble old man turned and went away by night, leaving Judas and me to find our sleeping friends.

"You shall yet have your hundred crowns," I said to my companion, as we lay down to sleep in the friendly shelter of the trees.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The way was easy and my heart was light, as I took the trail for Lake Sacrament. I was alone, for my companions would not be prevailed upon to adventure within reach of an enemy of whom they had heard so much. Judas was willing, but his incapacity prevented him, and all remained behind in the camp of Father Janselme. So I strode along merrily. The path was well beaten, and in my heart I knew that we had not wholly failed. We had driven off the hounds of war from New England. We had laid the groundwork for a perpetual peace, and now I believed that I was to accomplish the object of my search.

Upon the third evening a gentle wind was blowing out of the West, and out of the sky came the cheerful note of the wild goose leading his flock. The sounds of the spring-time filled the air, and dark lines of water replaced the whiteness of the ice. The streams were running; the sweetness had returned to the buds of the birch, and flowers were thrusting upward their pretty faces.

My heart was so light that I broke forth in singing: "The winter is past, the winter is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the mandrakes give forth their sweetness of smell; the time of the singing of birds is at hand; and, O, my love! show me thy countenance;

let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance comely."

I was gaining the summit of a hill, and as I came upon the level ground, I beheld against the sunset the figure of a man, standing as silent as a tree. The light of heaven blinds to the things of the world, and the man was a stranger to me, until I heard his human voice:

"These be proper words, and they have a good sound." Then I knew that it was Captain Pratt who stood before me, with a musket in his hand, and the cub of a bear across his shoulders.

"No sound was ever so sweet to my ears as the sound of your voice, and no sight so cheerful as the look of your face." That was my greeting.

I hurried to where he stood, and grasped his hand. No further word was spoken; but we looked, each into the eyes of the other, and there I found joy and courage, as if the future were already here, and each had won his heart's desire.

I could not frame the words to ask if Beatrix were found. We descended into the valley where was his encampment, with smoke of damp wood, and other signs of haste; and yet the question would not come. Captain Pratt, as if to busy his tongue, made many excuses for the poorness of the entertainment which he could offer, as he was ever on the move, and could eat only as food offered.

"When first I assumed this command," he said, "I appointed two mates, a pilot, and a quartermaster; but the spirit of decency and order is not in them. My sides are foul, my tackling chafed, and I long for the salt water again."

We entered the encampment, and I noticed certain old friends, light guns of the *Covenant* mounted upon wheels. But most I observed a lodge which stood by itself upon a little knoll. Captain Pratt placed his arm in mine, and together we mounted the rising ground. He gently seized the bearskin which formed the door. He lifted it, and allowed me a moment to glance within. In the fading light I saw upon a couch of skins the form, and face, of Beatrix Sherwyn. He dropped the curtain.

"Any one but you, who should peer within that lodge, would find my knife in his breast," said Captain Pratt, as we turned away.

"Is she dead?" I asked in a whisper which was full of awe.

"This is nothing more than a languishing for want of proper sustenance which I could ill afford. What with the management of these unruly savages, and conducting the operations of war, I have had little leisure for procuring food. I did not dare to venture far afield, lest she might be afraid, and what these brutish fellows kill they eat." Whereupon he fell to, and tore the hide from the warm beast which he had taken. He chopped the body in suitable pieces and put it in a pot, whilst I was making a fire of twigs.

"I shall complete this operation of housewifery," said he. "Do you return, and watch without."

"Do you not fear that death will come and watch with me?"

"You have been keeping evil company," Captain Pratt retorted sharply. "This talk of death is fit for priests."

Whilst the broth was brewing, I passed to and from the fire and the lodge, but no sound came from within. Captain Pratt could not leave his cookery, else the gluttonous men would have ravished the pot.

"The earth is a cloddish thing and full of evil," he said, as he added fresh fuel to the fire, and the smoke blew in his eyes. "I have made trial of the element water, and had a liking to know something of the land. But once I am on the *Covenant's* deck, I shall never again set foot on shore."

"Did you not like the Virginias?" I asked simply, yet with the hope that he would break the silence, and tell me of the finding of Beatrix; for I was in such a heat for knowledge that I could no longer restrain my desire.

"The wind was contrary, so I went to the country of the Pequots instead, thinking a smell of the salt air would do them good, and that they would enjoy a visit to their enemies."

"Then you had learned of this Quaker business the night before you left Boston!"

"I heard that there was a cloud in the sky, and I have heard that all clouds are white, when you look at them from the other side, so I was minded to try the experiment. I took to the Covenant and adventured as far as to the Pequots, and then to the Dutch settlements on the Hudson. The desire for information touching a point upon which I was previously advertised, as you suggest, was strong upon me, so I made a journey into these northern parts, where I have seen many curious things. It is well to keep several things in mind at the same time." That was all the answer

which I could extract; but it was enough to make it clear to me that Captain Pratt was the cause of this inroad upon the Mohawks, and that the Eastern Indians were thereby directed from preying upon our frontiers, and the Iroquois ready for peace.

When next I passed to the lodge there was a faint cry from within as if one were afraid. I restrained my passion to enter, and fled to Captain Pratt for advice.

"You did well," he commended me. "The feminine nature has respect for the trifling adornment of the person; and you would not suffer from the attention of a peruquier and a tailor. But we shall attend to that in good season." Captain Pratt removed the cover from the pot, and filled a bowl with the savoury contents.

"I am a poor drudge," he exclaimed as he bore the dish away, filling the air with the savour of food. "What would not Hugh Cornish say, if he saw me engaged in this humble employment?"

It was my turn to guard the pot, and I watched with envy, as Captain Pratt passed within the lodge. For the first time I was conscious of my appearance. I felt of my hair, and it was tangled like a hermit's. My feet were shod with the hairy heels of a moose. My clothing was mostly the untanned skins of beasts, and I resembled a Christian only in respect of the weapons which I bore.

Had I caught sight of Beatrix at that moment I should have fled, before she cast her eyes in my direction. My vision returned to the splendid simplicity of her dress, and her noble manner, when I sat by her side in the rich house in Lombard Street. I had

pursued her over the seas and through the wilderness, with love in my heart and a declaration ready upon my lips; but now my love had turned to worship, and my protest to adoration. For the first time I comprehended the meaning of the Marian idolatry. But at length I heard a voice from the lodge. It was the voice which I last heard, as we watched together in the Alderman's house, and all fear left me. Captain Pratt came out at that moment with the empty dish in his hand.

"Is she in reality the daughter of the admiral?" I enquired with a pretence of taking interest in his whim.

"I believe it is the very same," he replied.

"Did you not ask if she had any proof of her parentage?"

"We shall have all the proof we require, when we come into my cabin on the *Covenant*. Till then I adjure you to secrecy."

"This is a happy issue to your labour," I declared, and made as if I would talk into the night.

"This is enough for one day," said he. "It is time for sleep."

"Truly," I assured him, "it is enough for me that Beatrix is found, and I desire to dwell upon the event."

Captain Pratt led me to a new lodge which his quartermaster had prepared; and, as I came within, I cried aloud with joy. There was set forth a new leathern doublet, a hat with a curling brim, breeches, and boots, and other articles which I need not mention. He bade me sit down; and, whilst a young savage held the torch, he applied the scissors to my

locks, as if he were the greatest dandy in the world. Then I had a longing for the running brook; and the lad having conducted me to the water, night-time as it was, I had the benefit of much soap. I came back to the tent, and after further talk with my tried companion, I lay down upon a new couch, happy and clean.

In the morning, as the sun arose, Captain Pratt came into my lodge with the air of a play-actor, and awakened me. The young savage fetched fresh water, and I arrayed myself as comfortably as if I were in the great cabin of the *Covenant*. I came out into the morning air, and the squalor of the scene was blotted out. My steps were drawn to the tent upon the hill, and in that moment Beatrix stood in the door.

The forest vanished as a dissolving vision. sense of time and space disappeared. Vanished too the awe which oppressed me in the princely house of the merchant. It was again the narrow hedged lane. and the little child clinging to my breast. We were at one with each other, and with the elements of nature which surrounded us. Beatrix moved her lips, as if she were about to speak, but no words came, and though I had spent a year in rehearing this performance, I was in a like state of unreadiness. If her voice told me nothing, if I missed the sweetness of its notes. I could read the secret thought of the true. brave, heart in the limpid eyes. I stood back a pace to behold the full beauty of her, to glory in the colours which played upon her face, and never shall my eyes look upon a more pleasing sight - not even when they shall be opened in the court of Heaven. At my look of wonderment a rosy smile burst upon her face.

"This smile upon your face I have sought over lands and seas to find," I said with great cheerfulness.

"It has been in my heart, since first your life came near to mine," was her reply.

"Is it then in very truth for me?" I went to her side, and took the strong slender fingers within my hand. Beatrix turned about, and together we walked within the lodge. The curtain which was a bear's skin dropped of its own weight.

It must have been after the lapse of some considerable time that Captain Pratt's voice broke the silence, and Beatrix went to raise the curtain to allow him to enter. He was followed by a lad who was dressed in a scandalous fashion, and I put him forth, after taking from him the burden of speckled fish which he carried.

"We must not neglect the care of the body," said Captain Pratt, and he fell to the preparation of food. Beatrix knelt in the midst to make a fire; and, as the sunlight streamed in at the uncurtained doorway, and flooded the place with splendour, I took occasion to observe the robust roundness which had come to allay the sense of her straightness and height, the rich colour which had replaced the extreme fairness of her face, and the agility, and strength, which she displayed, as she leapt to her feet with laughter upon her lips, when the flames rose up from the ground.

I made an effort to become casual with Captain Pratt, and only succeeded in being distraught, whilst he and Beatrix busied themselves about humble domestic duties. A fire of glowing coals was in the centre of the lodge; a commodious hole above allowed an exit

to the smoke, and soon the air was filled with the savour of food. We three sat together, and dipped into the same dish.

"At length we are at peace," I mused.

"Peace! There is no peace," Captain Pratt broke out upon me of a sudden. "We are here in a kennel of wolves." Beatrix put forth her hand, and laid it upon his arm. His passion died down.

"Let this day, at least, be a day of peace," she said in her winsome voice.

"I spoke hotly," he confessed; "yet I have many cares with perfidious allies, and ferocious foes."

"I have gained some experience in these matters," I said, "and it may be that I can come to your help."

"And I," said Beatrix, "am swift to run and strong to carry."

"Let be! Let be!" Captain Pratt gazed at Beatrix with an outburst of tenderness upon his face; and, rising from his place, he walked away with the heavy air of a man whose work is done. In distress at the distraction of so tried a friend, I followed him; but he gave no sign, and I returned to find Beatrix ready to venture forth with me.

CHAPTER XXXIV

WE left the encampment of savages behind us. With wandering steps and slow, we took our solitary way, as sayeth the fine poet. The savage who might be lurking in the forest was as nothing, for love had cast out fear. After a hardy walk we came to a place dear to lovers, a sweet brook running to its own music There we found a stout trunk, through the trees. long since fallen. It was soft with green moss, and we took our places upon it, side by side. I supported Beatrix with my arm. She twined her slender fingers with mine, and nestled close, as she had done on that first midnight ride, when she was yet a child. loneliness of the forest she made good again the promise which she made, when first she lifted her young face to mine.

We two were alone in the whole world. The sun was going down in the West, and a soft light had crept over the evening, before we had finished with the confusion of questions and answers, which, at this distance of time, I despair of reducing to order.

I began with an account of my escape from the burning house, of the misery I experienced when I supposed that she was destroyed, of my departure from England, and my journey over sea in the *Covenant*. I told her of my troubles in Boston, of my casting out from the community, of my encounter with Captain

Sherwyn, and of the disclosure which he had made to me that she had not perished. I made mention of my plot to draw him off from his design of vengeance against Boston, by encouraging his search for her; but I did not disclose to her that he was not in very truth her brother, that Alderman Sherwyn was not her father. Therefore I was obliged to keep silence about my great renunciation, and the risk which I incurred, lest, when Beatrix was found by him she should be lost to me.

"And what became of my brave, and faithful, brother?" she asked with wistful eyes, heedless of my adventures.

"I left him in great felicity, recovering his health in the house of the Governor of Providence. He was contracted in marriage to the Governor's niece," I added, desiring to set that matter at rest forever.

"He was good to me," Beatrix mused. "He loved me as sister never yet was loved." I was seized with a hatred of myself for encouraging this delusion, but the secret was not mine to disclose. I was filled with consternation, lest, when Beatrix learned the truth, she might cry out against me for having inveigled her affections. Yet it was not my fault that Captain Sherwyn had contracted himself to Agatha Rogers. He had discovered my love for Beatrix. He had affirmed that it was I whom Beatrix loved. Yet, my heart told me that this unconscious reasoning was sheer casuistry. I was distraught, and Beatrix observed the change in my disposition.

"I do love my brother," she repeated gently, as if she were afraid. "Am I to be blamed?" Her accent

probed my conscience. I arose and walked in the woods.

"The wind bloweth whithersoever it listeth," I said, when I had taken my place again. "Love, like the wind, gains no direction from intelligence or reason." A wall had grown up between us. Beatrix answered nothing. Her eyes were upon the running water, her hand upon the mossy log.

"There is a thing which I have to say," I broke forth of a sudden: "Captain Sherwyn is not your brother."

"Then his father was not my father," she cried, with the look of a frightened fawn in her eyes, as she lifted her face to mine.

"I was compelled to mention this, that there might be no secret thing between us."

"Then who is my father?" she murmured, and her despair went to my heart.

"That I cannot tell," I answered, and her arms went about my neck, as if there were naught else in the world to cling to. Beatrix fell into a passion of weeping, and I strove to comfort her as well as I could.

"Now it is all clear to me. It was not a father's, or a brother's love, which I had." She shuddered, and nestled the closer to me. She covered her eyes with her hands. The thing was off my mind, and in the peace which came I was content to pass my days where I was. But after a little my posture grew uncomfortable, and then impossible. I aroused her.

"Now am I free," she exclaimed, with a new light in her face. "The past has clung to me like an outworn garment, the outward splendour of living, which was not mine by right, which I never loved." With a sudden movement which brought me within a little of being projected into the brook, she leaped to her feet, and with pliant limbs gained the bank like a free creature of the woods.

The sun was at its height. It was time for food. Like two good companions we wandered amongst the trees gathering nuts which had been sweetened by the frosts of winter. I took two fishes from the brook. whilst Beatrix kindled a fire. I gave her of the broiled fish. With pretty gestures she supplied me with the nuts which she had roasted, and there was much laughter proceeding from slight cause. So we sat and tasted till the meridian heat was over. When the humble feast was at an end, we cast ourselves down on the green bank of a clear, smooth, pool which seemed like another sky, and wore away the day, until the cooling sun declined to afternoon. I had never before heard enough talk from a woman. In turn, I continued the relation of my journey in the country of the Narragansetts, and mentioned the great sickness, and the encounter which I had with Judas, the Iroquois.

"It was a man of this tribe," said Beatrix, "who came to my rescue, when I was in sore need of help. It might have been Judas, for he was a great traveller, and was then returning from the southward. He claimed that he had talked with a man who could raise the dead, after they had been in the ground for three days."

"That was myself," I assured her with an appearance of humility; "but I could not in reality perform so great a miracle."

"Had I but known it was you, what comfort should I have taken in the knowledge that you were in the same world with me!"

"This Iroquois deserves well of us. I have seen him since his meeting with you. It was he who directed my search anew, when I was in despair that you were lost for ever."

"Was it then for me that you ventured into the wilderness, and endured all these evils?" There was wonder in her wide eyes, and astonishment in her voice. She took her face between her hands, and gazed into mine.

"This has been the business of my life, ever since Captain Sherwyn disclosed to me that you had not perished in the burning house. For you I sailed the tropic seas, and searched the Southern Islands. There I endured the last things, but a ray of hope brought me back to Boston. It vanished again when I learned that you had been exiled into the forest. For you this war against the Indians was undertaken." Beatrix allowed her face to fall to the grass, and she was silent for a short space. Then she arose, and coming to where I lay, she knelt down, and placed her hand in mine with pretty speeches, and caresses.

"My heart warms towards this poor savage," she said when she had grown more composed. "He was kind to me. He found me, when the days had begun to grow short, and the evenings cold, and I was like to die."

"Were you not terrified with his horrid aspect?" I asked, with my heart full of pity as well as love.
"On the contrary, I was glad for the nearness of one

of the human kind. I was not afraid, for I had the poison bag of a serpent in the hollow of a nut, which I would not have scrupled to use upon my life, had there been need."

"You must have been reduced to a low estate, when the presence of a savage was a comfort to you," I said in commiseration of her misery.

"He was kind to me," Beatrix repeated; "and in the end I discovered that he could converse in French. He went out of his way to conduct me to his encampment of women, and he promised to send me to the French settlements on the St. Lawrence."

"How did you fare amongst those strange companions?"

"At first they seemed to be no better than dragons of the desert; but I quickly discovered that they had human hearts, and I grew to love them, and their children. They used me not unkindly. They taught me to make shoes for my feet, and clothing to keep me warm; and I offer you testimony that I was not an unapt pupil." With this, Beatrix thrust out a little foot which was shod with the tanned skin of a deer; and it made me wonder how so dainty a thing could have carried her so far.

"Did you attain to equal skill in the other arts of the woodland?" I asked; for I had a thought that we might spend the remainder of our days in the forest.

"I learned to dig away the snow, to cover the bared earth with boughs of the spruce, and to sleep upon it with a contented heart."

"Did you not weary of the continual presence of these brutish folk?" I asked, having in mind the bad experience which I endured in Judas's camp, and wondering that beauty such as hers should be joined with so great fortitude.

"On the contrary; it was better than a solitary exile. My brother was lost. My father was dead." Beatrix covered her face with her hands, as if to shut out the horror of that night in Lombard Street. I took them both in mine and she sheltered her head upon my breast.

"I will be more than these to you," I whispered in her ear.

"You were dead also. That is why I was so forlorn." Some time passed before Beatrix was at leisure to continue her relation.

"The winter was upon us, and often we lay by the fire with little food. Then there was a commotion. Messengers came and went. From what I knew of their language it was clear that there was war, and that it was going badly with them. Strangest of all, I had a secret desire for their success."

"Against me?" I asked with laughter.

"I could not guess that you were the cause of this disturbance, and that it was you who forced us ten days farther into the western wilderness. I blame you for our hardships, and certainly they were great; but at length we came to a small lake in a great ravine, which seemed to satisfy the old men. There we made our encampment and I was given a lodge for myself."

"Many a long day and longer night did I rest in that lodge which was hallowed by your presence. Why did you not leave behind some record that it was you who had occupied it?"

"I knew of none who would care to hear," she replied simply.

"How little could I guess that I should hear it from your own lips."

"But how came you within my lodge?" Beatrix asked. "Am I to tell all and hear nothing?"

I was loath to lose the music of her voice upon the still air of the declining day; yet I was compelled to relate the incidents of our campaign, and when I mentioned the dangerous situation in which I found myself at the end, her eyes dilated with horror.

"Could this savage be the same who was kind to me?" she cried, and I could not bring myself to tell of the evil which came upon him; but I mentioned that we became good friends, and that we should see him again.

Beatrix was not content. She persuaded me to recount the events which occurred after I had left Captain Sherwyn in the Governor's house; and as quickly as I could, I told of the voyage to the West Indies, and the discovery of the ship in which she had sailed. I could scarce bring myself to mention the distress which I experienced, when I found upon my return to New England, that she had been there before me, and was lost to me for a second time.

"Why did I not know?" she murmured. "What sorrow would it not have spared to us both!"

"Sorrow is the measure of joy," I said. "But were you not afraid in the solitude and darkness of that first night in the wilderness?"

"Not more than the matter demanded. I looked up into the heavens, and saw the face of God who framed them. My soul was filled with forgiveness, and my

heart with courage. It was as if I had a light to my path, and from that time onward I was kindly led."

"How did you pass your first lonely night?"

"When I was left by those misguided men, I fled further from their abodes; and, following the sun as it set, I lay down at last upon the warm earth. I had a little food, and some necessaries from a minister who had been very kind to me; and when these were exhausted, I quickly learned the ways of the woods. I had an abundance of acorns, ground-nuts, and roots. I caught the trout beneath the stones, and once or twice had a young partridge or a hare."

"But were these sufficient to support your strength and spirits?"

"Every day I was improving. I was strong to climb, and swift to run; but when the days began to grow short, and the evenings cold, I was like to die. Then I lived on whortle-berries; but my fingers were so cold I could scarce bring them together to hold the berries fast. My feet were bruised with stones; I was pinched with cold, and almost pined to death from hunger. When I was tired with travelling, and ready to be frozen, I caught sight of the Iroquois who rescued me."

The half was not told, but the day was done; and it was time to return to the encampment. I left Beatrix in the open glade, till I found the trail. I called her name aloud, and it seemed to fill the whole world. She came to me and together we made our way in the gathering shadows.

"Shall we come here again in the morning?" she asked with pretty shyness.

"Here or elsewhere," I said; "to-morrow, and to-

morrow, till I am done with hearing you speak. It is now a year-and-a-half since I feasted my eyes upon you; and it will take, at least, so long as that, to rehearse the events of each day."

We passed out of the shadowy woods, and came to the edge of the high ground surrounding the valley in which the encampment lay. The sinking sun at a great distance shed its last light in our faces, and in the gloom below we could discern that the camp was astir. Captain Pratt was at work as if he had some great business in hand; and I was filled with shame for minding my own pleasure, and leaving to an old man the management of his unruly Indians.

"My heart smites me for neglecting so tried a friend," I said.

"And I too am much drawn to Captain Pratt in love and affection," Beatrix added with feeling in her voice; "but he did not tell me that he had you for a friend."

"Did he not mention that we sailed in the Covenant, that we were partners in a mad enterprise, that we were allies in this war, and that his zeal in searching for you was only second to my own?"

"He told me none of these things. When I gave him an account of your finding me a little child crying in the night, he only said: 'He may find you again.' Then I was obliged to acknowledge that you were dead, and he did not enlighten me."

"Captain Pratt is a man of strange conduct," I said, by way of apology for my friend, and yet with secret wonder at his faithlessness.

"Perhaps he was right," Beatrix reflected aloud.

"I had glorified you in my heart, and there is comfort in the great certainty of death."

"Let us finish this one day upon the heights," I said, for the sun was almost sunk. "You have not yet told me of the circumstances under which he rescued you, and there is yet time."

"It would be long to tell," she replied, "and there was a strangeness in it which I am unable to fathom." Beatrix paused as if in search of a beginning. "One night I was awakened by a horrid screeching, and the sound of guns. Peering forth, I saw by the light of the moon a hundred savages leaping over the slight barricade. At last I knew that the end had come. But above the din I heard a few words in the English tongue; and though they were not over delicate, they were as sweet to my ears as the angel's song which soon I thought to hear. They came from some leader; and though I could not understand the meaning of it all, they turned rage into mirth, since after infinite pains the warriors had only broken into an encampment of women. A drum was sounded. The women were bidden to stand forth. A sudden dread came into my heart; for I had heard from the Indians of white renegades who are more perfidious than the savages themselves."

"God pity you," I could not refrain from uttering.

"Praised be God, that I did not take the remedy against dishonour in my own hands," she exclaimed, and folded her hands upon her breast.

"God be thanked for sending you so noble a deliverer."

"More than noble. When I came to the door of the lodge, the moon was full upon me, and the Captain of the band stood without. All fear left me, for his face shone, as if he had seen an angel, when his eyes fell upon me. He took my hand in his, and raised it to his lips, as if I were very child of his own; and, gathering me in his arms he broke into a passion of weeping. I sank upon the snowy ground, so great was my wonder and joy. He turned and walked a few paces amongst the trees, and then came back. He raised me up, and said in a voice which was incredibly sweet, coming from so resolute a face: 'Child: God be witness: My life for yours: One honour for both: Come with me: Trust where you do not understand.'"

I yearned to reveal to her that she was the daughter of his admiral, the quest for her the principal object of his life, but the secret was not mine to disclose.

The sound of a heavy gun came shuddering up the valley and we hastened to descend. The torrent of emotion within me was such, that I conducted Beatrix in silence to her lodge; and then sought the secrecy of my own shelter, where I might reduce my mind to order, and reflect upon the events of that great day, but it was long within the night before calmness fell upon me.

In that one day strength had come back to tired limbs, rest to the weary body, and quiet to the sore-tried heart. Peace came, and brooded over us with outspread pinions, and love found a refuge in the shadow. Together we had found a home in the wilderness; for home is where love is. What though human habitation were wanting, though the sweet fields of England were replaced by uncouth hills, though sights and sounds were strange? What though the

birds of the wilderness had less of power than our own missel-thrush, less variety of song than the mavis, less of melody than the blackbird! They sang to ears new tuned a sweeter strain than the red-breast's burst, or the merlin's whistle, which comforted me on many a lonely watch when I served the Lord in my own country. Now, as I look back across the weary waste of the years, that woodland day arises to my vision, as one which was filled with the singing of the birds, and the glad faces of the flowers.

CHAPTER XXXV

CAPTAIN PRATT was breaking camp, and I was awakened by the frail shelter coming about my ears. I had scarce time to array myself, when the world lay open before me, the warriors toiling at their tents, and their scanty baggage. Beatrix was already afoot, radiant as the morning, and putting her hand to any task which she could find. I saluted her gravely, as became the public place in which we were, and made an excuse to Captain Pratt for having deserted him on the previous day.

"For," said I, "Beatrix and I are old friends, and we had many things to discuss."

"And I too had occupation," he rejoined; "but even if I had the greatest leisure in the world, I fear that a conversation which lasted the length of a day would have been a matter of tediousness to me."

"When you and I first met," Beatrix said in sweet rebuke, "we talked for a week, and the conversation was only interrupted when Captain Dexter arrived."

"You had rather say that it was you who talked."

"But, certainly, you showed no indisposition to listen."

"I trust that I am a polite man," he protested gravely.

"It was an excess of politeness, which made you sit by the hour hearing the petty details of a young girl's life, putting suggestions in my mind, and words in my

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mouth, studying my features, and inspecting the conformation of my hands."

"You are but a queer creature which I discovered in the forest," he urged in his own defence.

"Then, you are the greatest naturalist in the world; for, not content with knowledge of the object before you, you searched my mind for recollections of my mother." Beatrix grew suddenly grave, as if her lightness of speech had betrayed her into an indiscretion. An Indian was mishandling a dog, and Captain Pratt flew at him for his correction.

"Would that I could amend my unseemly behaviour and lightness of speech," she said to me, in sorrow for the disturbance which she felt she had created.

"In my experience," said I, "Captain Pratt has a useful gift in regulating disorders of speech or conduct. Tried as has been our friendship, I feel a certain restraint in his presence."

"It is that which makes me wonder; for I have no more apprehension of him than if he were my father." Captain Pratt returned from his task, and found us as busily engaged as if we would talk all day.

"It is time to stop this foolery," he cried, and his seriousness of demeanour declared that there was other business in hand.

"I am at your service," said I. "This idle felicity cannot endure for ever."

"We must make shift to leave this country; but retreat is as difficult as advance."

"Let us first see how we stand," I asserted with some vigour; for Beatrix was by my side, and I was anxious to show myself in the character of a soldier. "The

troubles on the frontiers of New England are over. The passage is safe but the way is long. How do matters stand to the South of us?"

"The wilderness to the eastward you appear to have found toilsome," Captain Pratt continued. "The distance to the West I judge to be great, and there is said to be a dearth of shipping in those parts even if we reached the sea. Certainly, I am not minded to go back the way by which I came, for often I shut a door behind me."

"But what of the Covenant?" I cried, as if I had made a discovery.

"The Covenant is under the guidance of Hugh Cornish. He is a master of his craft, and will not leave her long chafing at her cables. Besides, there is no good anchorage for ship of mine at the mouth of the Hudson."

"Shall we not then go to the northward?"

"As for that, I have observed from my small experience on land, that a man may journey North or South, East or West; but in the end he will surely come to the sea."

"What do you propose?" I asked, turning to Beatrix. Captain Pratt looked at me, as if I had said a foolish thing, which indeed I had; but he checked his speech.

"I propose that we stay where we are," she answered promptly; and yet Captain Pratt said nothing.

"My health is suffering for the salt air," he pleaded with an appearance of humility, when he had recovered from his astonishment.

"If this were a council of war," I said, "I should

cast my voice for the same proposal, but that I have an ally to the northward, who awaits my coming."

"This is a more serious matter than appears," said Captain Pratt soberly. "I have intelligence that a considerable band of savages lies to the northward, not four days from here, and that it is directed by a warrior in the guise of a priest. I am sick of war. I am yet more sick of perfidious allies."

"This Jesuit is my friend and ally," I declared proudly, and Beatrix was there to hear. "I have made a treaty of peace with him, and have embraced the New England tribes as well."

"Then you may include my rabble from the South," said Captain Pratt, looking with scorn upon his followers who were clustering about, anxious to be gone where they might have fighting or food.

"It is even a larger matter than that," I continued. "Father Janselme and I propose that we shall proceed to Quebec, that I shall speak for the English of New England, to the French of New France; and so conclude a general peace which shall extend from the Great River to the sea." Captain Pratt's amazement was something to see.

"Little could I think that you would engage in commerce with a Jesuit," he said, "as soon as you were out of my sight. As for this Father Janselme, he must be a great saint or a great fool, and neither is of much value in the making of war or of peace. However, I shall not interfere with your design, so long only as it affords a way out of this unprofitable country."

The camp was broken. A great fire was lighted, and the warriors were summoned. Pipes and tobacco

were brought forth, and all sat about in a huge circle to enjoy themselves in a conference, with talk and smoke. Captain Pratt made a speech in their own tongue, which he afterwards translated for me:

"My children, I praise you. You have covered your enemies with leaves. You have found the daughter of the sun, and her brother has come to fetch her away. I go with them to the North, else the grass will wither, the leaves fade and the streams sink into the earth. Do you go back to your own people, and think of the great doings which you have seen." Thereupon a wily old warrior arose and began a discourse which I thought would never have an end:

"The great chief has a heart of the right shape. He has given us clothing; and, when he goes away he will leave all things behind, besides a musket apiece, with powder, and lead, and some rum out of his great storehouse. Thereby he will make the parting easier to bear."

"You shall have all these things, if you go quietly to your homes," their leader assured them. "We are done with war. Now it is peace; and my brother has a great project in his mind. I ask you to appoint six of your number to accompany us, and speak for you to the French Governor, and the two great fathers who dwell across the water."

The day was nigh spent before the conference was at an end, and the deputies appointed, for the Indians are great politicians. I thanked Captain Pratt for his enthusiasm on behalf of peace, but he was doubtful.

"I have no such expectation," he said. "I am chiefly anxious that you be convinced of the folly of it, and

these six statesmen will be useful in propelling the canoes."

The company of warriors turned southward, and before we knew that we were alone, they were lost in the shadows of the mountains and the woods. With our six ambassadors we advanced to the North, following the trail by which I had come, the Indians ranging ahead and on both sides, to give warning of any unusual event, though we were not apprehensive of danger.

We proceeded in a leisurely way, trusting to overtake Father Janselme in due season. Though the way was easy, we made no effort after speed, for it was the spring-time, and the forest was converted into a goodly garden. The days passed quickly, and I could fill a book with pretty reminiscences of this delectable enterprise — conducting Beatrix back to the world again.

After five days there were signs that we were nearing an outpost of civilization, and by the evening we found that it was so.

We had been living in close intimacy, but as our forest wanderings came to an end, a sense of embarrassment dimmed our confidence. The time had come for a formal ceremonial of marriage with her. In the wilderness her mere presence was enough; but that could not endure for ever, and when our simple duties of housekeeping were over for the night, I opened up the matter with her in all naturalness and confidence.

"We are near the end of our wanderings," I said, "and there is at hand a priest who is recognised by

many as competent to perform the rite of matrimony. Do you so recognise him?"

"Whether marriage is a rite, or a sacrament, I do not pretend to decide," Beatrix replied with a contented sigh. "I hold it to be a covenant made in the presence of God. It may be that this priest can lend to it the authority of earthly law."

"We had better seek the advice of Captain Pratt," I said; "though, for my part, I do not look upon the publishing of the banns and the sermon as the heart of the contraction." Captain Pratt entered our shelter at that moment, for he had been following his own devices upon the journey, either wandering by himself, or consorting with the Indians, as pleased him best, and manifesting little concern about the direction which we took, or the destination at which we aimed. He had left Beatrix and me to ourselves; but upon this last night he sought our company, and together we made a cheerful family. This afforded me an opportunity of taking his opinion upon the important matter which we had been considering.

"How, in your view, may a contract of marriage be sanctified?" I enquired of him.

"I have always observed more labour bestowed upon inveigling the affections of a woman, than upon the ratification of the union." This was his unsatisfactory reply.

"Do you hold that the presence and office of an ordained minister is necessary?" Beatrix demanded.

"I have no settled view," he replied. "I myself have upon occasion performed this ceremony, and always found it efficacious; but, to make it more formal, I did accompany it with a discharge of musketry."

"Our company is small for any considerable report," I said.

"I could discharge a piece, if it were put in my hands," Beatrix ventured in all modesty, with a blush upon her countenance which became her well.

"I do not hold that such a waste of powder is absolutely necessary," Captain Pratt remarked in a judicial way. "Any magistrate, or Captain, or a man of dignity, may conduct the business. Indeed, my friend Governor Bellingham married himself to Penelope Pelham."

"That is an extreme view," I protested.

"In these unsettled times, when we have reason to be frightened at every noise, marriage is not to be undertaken lightly." He pronounced this opinion with much gravity of aspect.

"Does your judgement lie in favour of postponing our contraction beyond the first seasonable occasion of solemnising it?" I asked with some asperity.

"Marriage is an adventure. It is easy to guess which should come first, the nest or the mate."

"What is your view, Beatrix?" I asked, for she evinced an interest in the conversation which was not unreasonable.

"I have no fear," she declared bravely, "of what is to come. If evil, two can bear it better than one. If good, the goodness is multiplied."

"Truly spoken," cried Captain Pratt. "Yet I advise you to delay, until the incommodiousness of our present situation is past. When we come upon the deck of the *Covenant*, I myself shall unite you in the holy bond, and join my blessing thereto. And, Hugh

Cornish, I am persuaded, will mark the occasion with a discharge of cannon, and sweeten it with the smell of much powder."

"I am not wholly convinced of the propriety of this view," I protested as Beatrix arose, and proceeded to some task with maidenly reserve.

"You are under no compulsion. You have near you one to love, and, so far as my observation goes, one to love you, — and that is the foundation of much trouble. Love Beatrix. Be content."

But I was not content. My mind was inflamed by the nearness of the priest who, in the judgement of many, was competent to perform this office for us, and I persisted in my enquiry.

"I offer no opinion," he protested hurriedly. "My temper is uncertain. I will not be a sharer in the rites of Thammuz. The passion of love disorders the mind and I cannot answer for what you may do; but I give you warning of the sentiment which I entertain."

CHAPTER XXXVI

Upon the sixth day of the journey we stumbled upon the Jesuit's encampment. Father Janselme was about to commence the exercise of his holy office, and would not desist for even so great an event asmy return, nobly accompanied as I was. Therefore, we had leisure to observe the performance of his rites. He stood upon a slight rise of ground, and by a sign bade us to draw nigh. We came within the circle of worshippers, and Captain Pratt regarded the ministrant fixedly.

"This black garment must be an encumbrance to him, if he should ford a stream, or leap a rock," said my companion quietly.

"But his face is sweet," I whispered with admiration, for I had not seen it clearly, when we conversed together in the duskiness of the evening and the forest.

"His face is sweet enough," said Captain Pratt, "but he has a sting in his black tail."

Father Janselme retreated into a tangled thicket, and out of a pack took many vestments, the livery of Rome—a prodigious store out of small compass—and proceeded to array himself. Captain Pratt evinced much curiosity.

"Time was," said he, "when I should have feared to look upon such a sight; but here in the wide world, with a musket in my hand, it occasions only interest."

"After this winter of savagery," I answered in a

quiet voice, "I could join with anyone who worshipped God, in the way which pleased him best."

Father Janselme emerged from the thicket robed in proper garments. He bore in his hands a small altar which he placed upon a huge stone.

"What is this long linen vestment which reaches to his ankles, and is girt so close?" Captain Pratt enquired, unable to repress his desire for information.

"The alb," Beatrix whispered with reverent wonder in her face.

"And this fine-figured riband, so curiously wrought, and pendent over the shoulder?"

"The stole," she replied with eyes and mind far away.

"And this long mantle over the alb?" he enquired with the curiosity of a child.

"That cape is the pluvial," Beatrix answered from a ready knowledge which surprised me.

"What will he do with this bunch of birch twigs which he holds in his hands?"

"That is the aspergill," and before she could say more the priest had begun his office. His fine voice arose on the still air, as he addressed us:

"To you who are strangers to this precious sacrifice I say that the service of God demands sprinkling with the lustrus, though the ingredients are wanting for the preparation of the water, in the manner which is authorised and ordained." He bent down and plunged the aspergill in the lake, and raised it aloft shining with the clear drops in the light of the morning.

"Why then do you not dispense entirely with this rite?" Captain Pratt interrupted, for he thought that he was expected to speak.

"Because I would symbolise the purity of the entrants into the sanctuary of the Most High. As the element of water doth outwardly wash away the filth of the body, so, inwardly, doth the virtue of Christ's blood purge our souls from the corruption, and venomous dregs, wherewith by nature they are infected."

"But if you have not the ingredients, as you admit, will this mummery be any the less efficacious?"

"We have warrant for using pure water alone, as was the practice before the Isidorian decretals, of whose authenticity I here make no mention."

Beatrix turned upon Captain Pratt a look of rebuke. He was abashed, and the priest resumed his office. Sprinkling the altar with the clear water of the lake, some fell upon the unclean bodies of the savages who had fallen into a posture of devotion, and a few drops came as far as where we stood. Captain Pratt winced.

"I looked that I should have died," he whispered to me; "or at least that this bewitched fluid would have burned like vitriol. Yet, am I none the worse."

Beatrix cast herself down, and I knelt by her side, for my heart was full of love for her, for God, and for the whole world. I joined my spirit with hers, and mingled my words with her voice, as she followed the priest, when he recited: "Asperges me hyssopo, et mundabor; lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor."

What followed I do not know, save that I worshipped God, and when all was at an end, I had obtained much refreshment of spirit. We arose, and the hands of the holy man were extended in benediction.

"Truly," he said, addressing me, "you have cause to give thanks to God."

"Which I do with humility and joy."

. "And you, daughter of this faith — to you has been vouchsafed much mercy."

"His goodness and mercy have compassed me about, and shall do all my life," the sweet maiden replied, and it was none of my business to inform the reverend man of the diverse training in religion which she had enjoyed.

"These be excellent doings," Captain Pratt broke in, as the priest was about to address him in turn; "but we can discourse further of these matters, when we have good leisure. Let us first agree upon article of consortship, and so proceed in order."

Judas leaped to his feet with the alacrity of a man who is about to be defrauded. He came amongst us with more celerity than we had expected; and when his eyes were turned to Beatrix, there was recognition in his face. She knew him at once, and greeted him as a comrade.

"Am I to have the hundred crowns for my captive?" he demanded, and his companions crowded close, eager for my reply.

"I believe you are worth a hundred crowns," I said to Beatrix who stood in sweet bewilderment, as the bargaining proceeded amongst the savages whose cupidity was now aroused.

"Is this the Guinea coast?" Captain Pratt demanded; "or a seminary of Rome? I like to know the company which I keep." Thereupon I was compelled to mention to him that I had undertaken to pay to the Iroquois a hundred crowns, if he would deliver Beatrix into my hands.

"Have I no rights in this transaction?" Captain Pratt

enquired with sudden contraction of his brows. "I have some experience in this kind of trading, and am not minded to be defrauded."

Beatrix evinced much merriment, when Captain Pratt offered to the Iroquois a paper drawn upon his store-house in Albany to cover the hundred crowns; but Judas would not receive it.

"How can I make so great a journey?" he pleaded, as he put his fingers to his face. His companions did not understand all which was going forward; but enquiry was in their eyes, and suspicion in their minds.

"But," said I, "we have not between us so much as a hundred crowns in gold." Beatrix laughed, but Captain Pratt was sober, as he scrutinised the faces of the stalwart savages who accompanied Judas, and the considerable company of his tribe, who were with the Jesuit.

"Then the maiden is mine," Judas protested, and he laid a rough hand on Beatrix's arm. I could scarce refrain from striking him to the earth. Beatrix had apprehension in her face, but she carried it off lightly.

"Then I must make shift to remain in the forest," she said.

"I am prepared for such a contingency as has arisen," Father Janselme interposed with confidence. "These Indians are great traders, and understand their rights. There is a convention under which they are entitled to receive payment for any captives which they deliver to us, and this I am now prepared to make." The difficulty cleared at once. He went to his pack, and poured out a stream of gold into Judas's hand, and took in exchange a document to which he compelled him to affix his heathen mark. The Indians professed them-

selves to be entirely satisfied, and commenced their preparations for departure. Judas declined to accompany us, alleging his incapacity, and it was with difficulty that two of his companions were induced to go upon the embassage of peace. As he was leaving, I took him by the hand, and Beatrix joined her thanks with mine.

"If only I knew the sorcery of the boiling lead," he pleaded, and it required a moment for me to recall my strange experiment.

"Upon you and upon your children, for ever, this gift is conferred. Go, and do, as you have seen me do." He swelled with pride, and went away, as if he were my debtor. I trust the foolish fellow has not burned his hand. Certainly, I have not since made trial of the feat. They disappeared like spectres in the greenery of the woods, and I was merry with Beatrix.

"But now I belong to Father Janselme — not to you," she said in reply to a pretty speech.

"There may be some truth in your jest," Captain Pratt remarked with an appearance of gravity in his countenance.

"I trust that they are gone for ever," said I with relief, "and that I shall never see their painted faces more."

"Neither am I fond of trafficking with savages," he replied, "save in legitimate trade. I doubt that they are gone, and shall be surprised if they do not give us a shower of arrows, as we pass some wooded point of land."

When we were alone the Jesuit took the direction of affairs into his own hands, and opened up the matter of the treaty of peace. I was alive with enthusiasm, but Captain Pratt was in an ill-humour.

"A treaty between two," he said, "is a matter difficult enough to adjust. A treaty between three, some of them savages, some insincere and all stiff-necked, would be a fairly marvellous feat."

Father Janselme put off the character of the priest, and began to argue with insight and skill. He exhibited the dexterity of a man who is trained to carry his dish level; and, as he recounted the arguments in favour of peace, he marked off each upon his mangled fingers.

"We can settle nothing here," Captain Pratt exclaimed.
"I have never known a treaty to endure, which was negotiated, when the matches were burning, and the nets triced up. Send away one-half of your crew. That will leave our forces sufficiently equal, and so we may proceed to Quebec, which is a fitter place than this for talk." But Father Janselme would not agree to this.

"For," said he, "these are my converts who are on their way to Quebec, where they may enjoy such blessings of religion as I am unable to offer them in this outland place."

"I take no part in your schemes of religion," Captain Pratt retorted; "yet am I willing to accompany you for purposes of convoy, and transport." This was agreed upon, and we proceeded to make disposition of our forces. I proposed at once that we three should embark together, with the six Pequots to propel the canoes, but the priest would not consent to that arrangement.

"I am, in a sense, responsible for the safe-conduct of this maiden," he insisted, "and am unwilling to entrust her to the care of a tribe which is unfamiliar to me." Thereupon, he proposed that our Indians should journey by themselves, and that we should take places in his large canoe.

"It has ever been my custom," said Captain Pratt, as he excused himself, "to voyage with the convoy, and not with the passengers. Besides, the infirmity of my temper will not suffer this arrangement. If my followers were unaccompanied, they might grow faint-hearted, and turn back, which would be to the prejudice of your devout imagination about peace."

"Then the maiden shall abide with me," the priest affirmed with emphasis.

"In that case, with your permission, I shall remain by her side," I said with equal resolution.

In the end the Jesuit had his way; and we launched forth, a motley crew, in three of the frailest crafts in which a man ever trusted his life. Captain Pratt and his followers were in one, Father Janselme, Beatrix and myself in another, with ten stout fellows to wield the paddles, and in the third as many Iroquois by themselves. Captain Pratt found occasion in the confusion of embarking to take me to one side, and unburden his mind; but I thought his ill-humour arose from the management of affairs being taken out of his competent hands.

"We have before us a trial of patience," he said, "and I shall demand the life of this maiden at your hands."

"Patience only," I replied. "If danger, be assured that I shall perish first."

"This is the best which we can do," he concluded, and busied himself about his task; but I was alarmed at his gravity of demeanour, as he took a place amongst his followers.

His canoe went driving down the lake, and left behind a sparkling trail which widened to the shores. Presently it was lost to sight around a low, wooded point of land, and Beatrix and I were alone in the world once more. My old companion was gone; but with him went all distrust, and quiet fell upon the camp. We followed in a leisurely way, the Jesuit glancing from side to side as if he feared an ambush, but night came without sign of friend or enemy.

The degree of comfort which we experienced was not extreme, but Beatrix did not murmur. She took her share in the exercise of the paddle, in the preparation of food, and employed for our entertainment all the skill which she had acquired by her experience in the forest. In due time we came where the waters meet, and pour together to the sea, as the St. Lawrence River. The wind was high, and the river was wide, so we thought well to abide where we were, until the weather should moderate. We went ashore, and discovered a small house of bark which provided some retirement for Beatrix. She was fretted by the unceasing company of so many men, and I could only comfort her by saying that we should soon reach Quebec, where she might again procure the requirements of a civilised life. and the care and companionship of women.

To escape from the confusion, and have an occasion for quiet speech, though there was not much of importance to be said, we wandered hand-in-hand within the friendly shelter of the trees. Beatrix had a keen eye for woodland sights; and, as we talked of all which we saw, she spied a plant with red shining berries. .

"This fruit is new to me," she remarked. "How

would it not have cheered me when the nights had begun to grow cold?" And she put forth her hand, and eat of them.

"If it is new to you," I said by way of warning, "it may not be a natural endowment of the forest, but some harmful plant of medicinal and poisonous quality, which has escaped from the cultivation of a missionary's garden." She desisted at once, and her obedience was sweet to me.

"It is easy to obey," she replied to my words of praise, "when your commands fit so well with my own mood. Already my lips are bitter." I found that it was so, and in the experiment any possibility of danger passed from my mind.

Upon our return Beatrix developed a distaste for the exercise of walking, and her speech became dull. I was afraid that the toil of travel had been too great for her. She besought me to leave her alone for a little, and I obeyed. When I found Father Janselme, I informed him that Beatrix was inclined to give way to sleepiness and sloth; but he assured me that her lowness of spirits was due to the troubles which she had endured, and to the habitual drinking of water. I was wholly satisfied with this explanation which seemed so probable. When I returned, I found that she was somewhat revived, so I conducted her to the lodge of bark; and she entered in silence and alone.

When Beatrix did not reappear as soon as I expected, I made bold to enter the lodge, and it was the evening. I found her stretched upon the skins in ineffable peace. I was in sore distress, but when I came near, and took her slender brown hand in mine, she aroused herself,

and made a slight jest at her own frailness. My heart was filled with pity for the forlorn maiden, and I yearned to comfort her wholly.

"You are very good to me," was all she said.

"I would do more. It needed only the simplicity of these forest days to make you mine in very truth; and when we come to a convenient place our union will be hallowed by one who is properly appointed for that purpose."

"God has joined us," she said in a still voice; "and what God has joined I fear no man will draw closer. I am very faint." A flash of terror shot athwart my mind.

At that moment Father Janselme entered, bearing a dish of broth which he had made with his own hands. When he saw the still form upon the couch, he set down the refreshment which he had brought.

"I shall pray God for you both," he said as he went out, and left us alone.

Beatrix closed her eyes again. A sleeping maiden was a spectacle too holy to look upon; and, in embarrassment, and helplessness, I arose, and followed the priest with a new thought in my heart. I walked down to where the waters of the great river were gliding beneath the moon to the sea. A soft step approached. It was Father Janselme, and he seated himself by my side.

"I can see that this maiden is visited with some strange malady," he said after a space of silence.

"Think you it is of serious import?" I asked.

"At first I thought it was only vapours and dizziness, but now — "

"Then the desire of my heart shall be taken away;"

and I knew that the thing which I had greatly feared was come upon me.

"I have seen the frailty of all earthly things," said the priest in the sweet voice which recalled the former night when I sat by his side.

"The light of my life is going down in darkness, and naught remains for me," I said in my distress.

"There is ample time to think of yourself. Think of her, of her eternal peace. God may yet do unto her in accordance with His goodness and mercy. Come into the fold with her."

"This is a doleful thing, and I cannot see my way."

"For faith there is no need for seeing."

"I cannot bow myself in the house of Rimmon."

"You have scruples of conscience; but, when it may please God to open your eyes, you will know that religion is an assent to propositions, as well as a quickening of the life."

"I have no heart for argument," I cried, with the weariness of the afflicted patriarch.

"I know you for a man of clean lips, pure heart, and free from the carnal desire of the body," the priest continued. "I know also how goodly a person is this maiden. I offer to receive you both into the communion of saints. I offer to sanctify the union of your lives. Then you can minister to her in naturalness and confidence. Her chance of earthly safety lies in human care." I leaped to my feet, and hurried the holy man to the house of bark. Beatrix aroused herself. I sought her lips, and asked of her strength.

"I fear that I am going hence," she said faintly.

"How can your spirit break from mine?"

"It is but going to the Father of our spirits. When the time is come, our souls shall nestle together in His bosom."

"My child," said the priest, "my heart yearns for you. I offer you both the ineffable gift which has been entrusted to me; the joy, the peace, the harmony of a union with God in His church and with each other."

"These be good gifts," she whispered.

"If good for you, the more good for me," I answered, and was content.

"We profess the same evangel," said Father Janselme. "Human hearts and human needs are everywhere alike."

Then the reverend man did his office. In the end our hands were joined, a mist filled my brain, and a cloud was before my eyes. I could only see that the priest was there in surplice and stole, and his words filled the little sanctuary: "Ego conjungo vos in matrimonium, in nomine patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti."

When the ceremonial was at an end, I looked that I should have become a new creature; but I was none other than myself, my mind working freely. When the grey morning came stealing through the woods, one fact stood out above the confusion of the night. I had remained with Beatrix, and was ministering to her with a new sense of intimacy and confidence.

When I thought that her breathing had ceased, I experienced no emotion of terror, of grief, or of anger — only quiet wonderment as if I shared in the peace which was already hers. When it began again, I did not think whether it portended good or ill. I entertained no hope, as previously I had experienced no despair.

About the sunrising the tired eyelids stirred. Slowly Beatrix opened her eyes. She moved her lips, and there was a murmur from the couch. She strove to reach my hand, but could not, she was so utterly spent. She slept again and I watched her breathing. Her bosom heaved with slow regularity. At length—it must have been high noon—she opened her eyes with a look of confusion in her face, and a low cry, as she caught sight of me.

When Father Janselme returned, and found Beatrix with her hand in mine, her eyes open, and sweet words upon her lips, he raised his arms towards heaven, and with a face radiant with joy, he gave jubilant expression to the thought which was in his heart: "Now have mine eyes seen the glory of the Lord. He has raised the dead to life, and healed the heart which was bruised."

Forgetful of all save this great miracle he came near and, shadowing our heads with his hands, he cried a benison: "Blessed are you, and blessed am I, that this sign of the acceptance of my ministry has been vouchsafed unto me."

CHAPTER XXXVII

BEATRIX required only care and rest, and both she had in abundance. Towards evening she was able to walk out into the forest air and sunshine, as it were out of the valley of the shadow.

"This light is good to see," she exclaimed, casting her eyes over the green of the trees, and the shining waters.

"And if your eyes had closed, the light would never again shine for me," I protested with thankfulness at my heart.

"We are truly united by a close bond," she said; "by love, and by our community of suffering."

"Are you not in very truth my wife?" I urged.

"That is a question for the schoolmen to determine," she answered gaily, yet with a wistful appeal in her eyes.

"Then we shall arrive at no conclusion," I assured her with an assumption of cheerfulness, "till Hugh Cornish ratifies the event with a discharge of cannon from the Covenant's deck, or John Cotton publishes the banks, and preaches the sermon from his own pulpit." For this concession Beatrix became extremely tender, and we continued to dwell together as the dearest comrades.

The river was lit by the moon, and it was right June weather. Father Janselme was eager to be gone that

very night. His mind was aflame to carry the tidings of his miracle, and I could not find it in my heart to tell him of the red, shining berries which Beatrix had eaten. We took to the water again, and passed out into the swift current, which carried us well on our journey before the morning came.

The springtime was at its height, beautiful in itself, but doubly beautiful to eyes like ours, which had been new-opened. Beatrix was regaining her full strength, and took pleasure in all which we did, and in the new scenes which we witnessed. The speed of the river was such that it engendered in us a dancing tide of gaiety, and day by day we hurried on, heedless that there could be nothing better at the journey's end.

Towards evening of I know not what day the current failed us, and the canoes were propelled with much labour. We had met the advancing tide, and the suggestion of the sea was a lure to draw me on. Father Janselme encouraged speed, and with much reluctance tied up to the shore till the tide should turn; as the coast, he said, was none too safe, on account of a new breed of savages who might be prowling by night. It was a clear warm evening, and we walked upon the beach, or rested with our companions, so long as we remained. By midnight we were on the water again, and I was impatient, I know not why, that we should reach our destination. "Whence this anxiety to return to the turnoil of the world?" Father Janselme enquired. "Is anything preferable to this free, and commodious, way of living?"

"The smell of the sea is in my nostrils," I replied, as a vision of the *Covenant* arose before me; and with it a home, and civilisation for Beatrix.

"Return with me to the forest," pleaded the priest.
"There is work which you can do. You and this brave woman will be as a grain of mustard seed, a rod of spikenard in the wilderness."

"What is your view of this proposal?" I demanded of Beatrix.

"Where you go, I am content to follow; to remain where you abide," she answered promptly. The woman was under the domination of religion and love; but that imposed upon me the necessity of preserving a clear mind. The winter of savagery had been long. I had borne it, but I did not now choose to enquire how; and I had no mind to be thrust into it again.

"Upon this matter," I said to the priest, "I must take the advice of Captain Pratt who is a faithful companion, and a man of singular clearness of judgement."

"Captain Pratt is a violent man," the Jesuit retorted hotly, when he saw that I was resolute. "Yet, I trust to have some dealings with him, when we meet upon better terms."

"In any event," I said to soothe him, "there is this treaty of peace to discuss; and when we come to Quebec, we shall be in a situation to decide upon our future course."

With the morning light we caught a sign of smoke ascending from a low island; and as we came nearer, we felt sure it was no hostile encampment, but Captain Pratt and his band who were making their morning meal. We drew ashore. We had a good greeting, and joined our forces once more. The events which happened in the house of bark were now so far away, and Beatrix was in such bounding health, that I began to entertain

some doubts as to the reality of all which had occurred. Captain Pratt was for activity; and, beyond enquiring for our welfare, he showed that he was in no mood for receiving information.

"We are nearing the end," said Father Janselme, "and we shall proceed in company."

"This river, I take it, is free to all," Captain Pratt replied, "and I shall make my own disposition."

"We are now within the dominions of the king of France," the priest answered bravely; "and shall soon be subject to the orders by which they are governed."

"In such matters," Captain Pratt retorted, "I exercise a spirit of neutrality; and hold myself free to regulate my affairs, subject only to such conditions as I may find."

We embarked again; and, Captain Pratt dipping his hand into the backward-flowing river supped up the bitter water, as if it were the sweetest in the world. "This is better," said he, and fell to work with the paddle.

After a hard day, passed mostly in restraint, and silence, the great rock of Quebec heaved itself out of the water, its summit covered with the maple and the pine, its face scarred and broken, all very forbidding; but it gave me joy to think how a man could busy himself intrenching an army thereon. The sound of a bell came pealing over the river. It was the Angelus, and the priest almost overset the canoe in his alacrity to assume a posture of prayer. Kneeling there amongst the crew of savages, he appeared to enjoy a sweet communion. I drew Beatrix to my side.

"It is as if I were come back to the edge of the world once more," she said, "and I hesitate to enter into it."

"We shall enter together," I assured her, "and side by side we shall endure what it has to bestow."

There were none to meet us, so we went ashore in quietness. The Indians, leaping into the water, drew the canoes up upon the shingle. Father Janselme was accustomed to the path, and we followed him, as he led the way around the base of the hill. We passed a cluster of wigwams, which were filled with such sounds of mirth as proceed from the free use of French brandy. With one accord our companions deserted us to seek their own. The Jesuit first besought, then remonstrated, and then adjured, but Captain Pratt merely bestowed one or two curses upon them, as if he were glad that he was rid of their company for ever.

We continued past some warehouses, and climbed a most toilsome hill, until we struck a grand road which pierced the forest beyond. It led us into a square which was backed by a forbidding monkery, and had upon either flank a pair of private houses. The remains of a palisade protected the front, and within the square was a flock of peaceful sheep, with a few wigwams of Indians. In the gathering twilight we could discern dimly the guns of the fort, and in the distance the dark mass of the Governor's château. The Jesuit entered within the broken palisade, but Captain Pratt held us back.

"My business is with the Governor," he said, "and if you direct me, I shall seek him out."

"I must first pay my vows, and place my hands between those of the Vicar of his Holiness," the Jesuit interposed.

"I am not come upon any such business," Captain

Pratt protested, "and have no mind to enter further into this house of Baal."

"This is not the time, nor place, for blasphemy," the Jesuit answered calmly. "In the forest I endured much at your hands; but now I am upon holy ground, with more than my own soul to save."

"I exercise no restraint over your soul," cried Captain Pratt, "nor do I meddle with its salvation. When I had need of your company, I held my peace as well as I could; but now I am not called upon to suffer for lack of speech."

"We are here in a well-ordered community, where there are proper means to check excess of speech or of conduct; and I give you fair warning for your guidance." The Jesuit was not abashed by Captain Pratt's growing ire; but Beatrix was in distress, and I urged Captain Pratt to be amicable, and to give way sufficiently to pay our respects to the Vicar. He yielded, and we turned aside to a low house, but we could find none to inform us if the Vicar were within. Father Janselme knocked upon the door, and it was opened by the master himself. The priest knelt down; and seizing the long, thin hand of his Captain, he kissed it, and wept tears upon the ground.

"Arise, my son, I give you my benediction," and the prelate raised up the kneeling figure.

"Who is this shaveling?" Captain Pratt enquired of me.

"This must be that Levite, Laval of the house of Montmorenci," I answered softly.

"Then," said he, "to gratify my curiosity, I shall enter into this Roman lair."

Laval regarded us, as we stood behind the priest, with an austere visage. He fixed upon us a clear eye which glanced beneath strong arched brows, as his thin lips uttered the words: "Enter into my lowly abode. All are welcome, who accompany this devoted son of the Church."

"This cleric is a very priest," said Captain Pratt to me, as we approached the door, "a subtle and an artful person, and you will see what comes of consorting with strange companions." We came within. There was a foul smell of mouldy meat which the Vicar had been dressing with his own hands.

"I perceive, sir," said I, "that you make an exercise of patience, and it may be that we disturb you."

"These things pertain to the earth," Laval answered sharply.

"If he desires to mortify the taste, I commend him to a residence amongst the Indians at the head waters of the Hudson." Though the prelate did not understand the language which Captain Pratt employed, he suspected contumaciousness in the aspect of his face. His visage grew hard; his black cap rustled upon his head with the contraction of his brows; his scanty locks quivered, and his portentous nose dilated with the anger which he was at no pains to suppress. There were not stools sufficient to accommodate so large a gathering, and Captain Pratt seated himself upon the master's couch. Father Janselme hastened to give him a chair, but he refused to change his posture.

"For myself," he explained, "though I am not given to refinements, I prefer a higher couch which the insects cannot reach at one spring, and so find it the more difficult to ascend."

"What is your further business?" Laval demanded of the priest with some irritation.

"These are two useful men," Father Janselme explained; "and with one of them, at least, I have had a sweet passage — of which more anon." The fine forehead of Laval cleared at once, as the Jesuit began to unfold the dream of his imagination, that a great peace might be established from the Lakes to the sea. As he described its advantages Laval grew impatient, and finally interrupted his faithful follower.

"God knows everything," he said. "You, my son, will remain with me, and we shall enquire further of this large matter in the morning."

We took this for a dismissal, and I confessed that we were without an abode for the night, or for such time as we might remain.

"Who is this woman?" Laval demanded, for he was desirous of arranging some accommodation.

"This," Father Janselme replied, with much deliberation, "is a captive whom I have purchased for the price of a hundred crowns. I now place her in your keeping."

"Marie of the Ursulines will receive her," said Laval, as if the disposal of Beatrix were the most trifling affair in the world. But I had other views entirely. Father Janselme stood with palmed hands, and downcast eyes. He had been the companion of my forest wanderings; and there was about him an odour of sanctity, acquired, I suppose, from the events which had happened by the river, and in the house of bark. But

my whole being rose in revolt, when I realised that the prize which had been won by my agony was about to be snatched from my hand. Beatrix fixed her eyes upon me; and in them I could discover apprehension. My sword was by my side, and my hand was on the hilt. With the movement Father Janselme raised his eyes.

"The time for violence is past," he said.

"Force is ever the final resort. I scruple to use it before there is need. It will be my last refuge."

"Between you and me this necessity need never arise. This maiden is mine. I purchased her with my hundred crowns. Yet she shall be yours on easy conditions. I entreat you to abandon your violent life and remain with me." His voice was full of love and pleading.

"You shall have your gold in full measure," was all the answer I could find at the moment.

"It is not for us to barter a human soul, as if we were a pair of Indians. The king does not permit it. In his wisdom he has given to us alone his authority to rescue captives from the Indians, and thereby many souls have been saved to the Church." He thrust his hand in his bosom, and drew forth the paper which Judas had signed. He handed it to his superior.

"This document is valid," said Laval, when he had read it; "and will be enforced by all the authority of the king of France, together with such aid as I can bring. This maiden is a ward of the king, and I am his servant."

Captain Pratt was on the couch kicking his heels in total unconcern of the events which were passing.

He did not understand the language which we employed; but he could not fail to read the omens of trouble in Beatrix's face, and in my voice.

"It is growing late," said he, rising to his feet. "We shall discuss further of these matters in the morning." He was so insistent that I took my course from him, not knowing where it might lead. Laval and the priest spoke together in low tones; and I made as if I would converse with Captain Pratt, but the prelate prevented it.

"This devoted servant," he said, "informs me of much which has passed, and that he has hopes that you and this woman will yet come into the full warmth of the truth; but your companion is infected with the venom of heresy."

"I had hoped that these matters could stand, until we had adjusted the great Indian business upon which we are chiefly come. We are indeed ambassadors, and ambassadors should be put under no restraint."

"These are temporal affairs," the Bishop replied. "Good cannot result from neglecting higher concerns." He was not to be drawn aside.

"Then all must fail," I cried; "for my companion is a man of infinite resource and invention."

"Do not seek to alarm me. I am the more determined to reduce him to obedience, and I shall at once order his person to be secured."

"This is a large matter which you propose," I said to Father Janselme. "Give me till the morning, and you shall have my reply. If Beatrix is to remain here, I shall remain also; but you must allow me a night to reflect upon this doctrine of religion."

"And she will remain with Marie of the Ursulines."
"I am content to remain, for this one night," said Beatrix; but her piteous look of appeal belied the confidence in her words.

"You are dismissed," said the prelate, as he turned to his duties of housewifery. Father Janselme took his place by the side of Beatrix, and her eyes dilated with apprehension.

"I shall assist you in conducting this maiden to the convent of the Ursulines," said I, with my hand upon my sword, and Captain Pratt at my side, his eyes shining like broken iron, and his brows dancing. Beatrix walked between us. Four guards followed. The Jesuit went before. He crossed the courtyard, and knocked upon a door of stout oak planks, heavily studded with nails. It was opened by a woman; but before the priest could speak, Captain Pratt thrust him aside; and, taking Beatrix by the hand, stood in the doorway, and bade me give the maiden in charge.

"You will keep this woman safe," said I, "until you receive further orders from me."

"She is in the convent of the Ursulines," the woman replied in a sweet yet confident voice, and taking Beatrix by the hand, she drew her gently within. The door closed; and, immured behind those walls, Beatrix was further away than when she sailed the seas, or wandered in the trackless forest.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

My companion and I stood alone without the door in the warm darkness of the moonless night. The Jesuit had disappeared, his head bowed in an attitude of prayer, but a confidence in his gait, as if he were proceeding upon his Master's business.

"Truly," said Captain Pratt, "we are in the nest of the cockatrice. I see what has passed; but I give God thanks that I did not understand the language in which it was done. Else I could not have kept my tongue within my teeth. Not since a Spanish bullet broke the bone of my shoulder, have I felt such a rousing motion disposing me to something extraordinary."

"Worse is to follow. This prelate will order your arrest."

"I have no mind to be hanged, nor to accept the courtesy of the rack. He could roast me to a turn, but he is a novice in the delicate operation of hanging. I shall consult with the Governor."

"The Vicar Apostolic appears to be the chief authority in this community," I objected.

"I have no knowledge of the customs of this community; but there must be some whose interest is at variance with his."

"It will require time to ascertain the situation of public affairs, and I know of none to instruct us."

"Save Father Janselme, the Jesuit, and I should

like a better authority," said Captain Pratt with scorn in words and voice.

"I might make peace with him, for the sake of seeing Beatrix again." I was fearfully alone. Even this well-tried friend could not recompense for her absence.

"You see how your dealings have ended: Beatrix behind stone walls, our Indians drunk with French brandy, and we alone in the fortress of our enemies."

The nights were at the shortest of the year, but long enough, as we discovered, wandering about the broken hill-top, afraid to seek a resting-place; for, as Captain Pratt observed, "the most casual habitation might be a prison." It was scandalous to see how ill-guarded was the place: for beyond a few nocturnal revellers we had the night to ourselves.

Towards morning we found ourselves upon the extreme peak of the rock, where were some cannons, and they were company to us. We took what rest we could, till at length the dawn came stealing up the river, and in the rosy light of the morning we saw that we were upon a level eminence. Looking to the southward the prospect which we beheld was matchless in its beauty; two fortresses facing each other, and between them a river so great that the leviathan could take his pastime therein, the waterway from the world into the heart of the American continent.

"Is not this enough," cried Captain Pratt, "to occupy the mind of a soldier? It is not in the forests of New England, it is upon these heights that the battle will be fought, as one day fought it will be, and upon that day whoever wins shall win not alone a victory of war, but the fruits of an eternal peace."

Quebec in the morning was after all but a little place; a fort which was well devised, but ineffectively made; a residence for the Governor; a church; a convent and a magazine; and, at the base of the cliff a chapel, a mission house, a hospital and a cluster of Indian tents. In the whole settlement there were not above a hundred houses, and we took courage once more when we beheld the simplicity of it. At length we discovered a kind of tavern where we refreshed ourselves well, and obtained a sleeping room in which we were as secure as if we walked the open streets.

We were awakened by the sound of drums, and went to the window. A great procession was approaching. The Governor led the way. Laval came next, and following him was Father Janselme, with a rabble of priests, nuns, and neophytes. A guard of soldiers stood at the attention as the procession passed, and they saluted the Governor.

"Remove your hats," cried the Vicar; but the soldiers remained covered as they were.

"Kneel down and adore the Host," cried Laval in a voice of authority; but the soldiers did not change their posture.

The Governor turned about in his place, and thrusting forth his arm he cried in a voice which shrieked with anger: "It is the business of soldiers to stand—not to kneel."

The Vicar with a vindictive muttering commanded the procession to move on. The soldiers remained standing, and covered as they were. "I have seen enough," said Captain Pratt. "This Governor is a worthy man. I should like to do business with him."

We came below, and quickly overtook the procession; and, being well rested and well fed, the apprehension of the night had passed away. Beatrix was at an upper window as we went by, and she gave us a cheerful sign of greeting, which was a good omen.

"Have you a mind to be a sharer in these sacerdotal rites?" Captain Pratt enquired of me as we neared the church.

"I take no part in their schemes of religion," I replied; "but we shall suffer no hurt in beholding others who worship God after their own manner."

"Right, or wrong, I am resolved to mingle with this generation of Antichrist," he declared; "and it may be that I shall acquire some knowledge which may be useful in my future dealings."

We entered into the meeting-house which was called by the great name of Notre Dame de Recouvrance, and I must say it was scandalous how ornate it was with greenery, and garlands, and images, and representations of sacred events. Certainly, the church was filled usque ad cornu altaris with a throng of people who were intent upon the service of religion. Two things Captain Pratt observed which gave him much pleasure. The Deacon presented the incense first to the Vicar Apostolic, then to the priests of the choir, and sent a subordinate whose function I did not understand to offer it to the Governor. The Governor refused to accept it. There was a catechising of some children. The Vicar ordered that they should salute

him, before they made their obeisance to the Governor. The Governor arose and left the church, and we followed him.

"Quebec is much the same as Boston," Captain Pratt remarked, as we came away; "and the devil has yet wherewithal to console himself."

Upon the road to the Governor's house Captain Pratt was at his ease again. He conducted himself in an obstinate fashion, and sought diligently for occasions to give offence, going amongst the soldiers, and applying opprobrious epithets to Laval, chiefly in English, but also in very bad French, so that all might understand the sentiments which he entertained.

"I did try but their temper," he assured me, when I remonstrated with him; "and it is all which I could desire."

We entered the Governor's house unbidden, and unwelcomed, and waited in the anteroom an unreasonable length of time amidst a throng of soldiers who were going and coming incessantly. I sent notice to the Governor that two strangers desired an audience, and with great promptness we were bidden to his presence. He received us with the utmost of graciousness; and, after we had taken the places which he indicated, he demanded to know our business.

"We are two private persons," Captain Pratt assured him with an air of comradeship, "proceeding upon our lawful occasions, and have merely called to present our respects in a dutiful way."

"A large report has reached me," said the Governor, "through the Indians below the hill that you are engaged in a great enterprise of peace." "There was something of the kind; but it did not take me long to discover that I am fitter to deal with Jesuits, and savages, in war or in trade, than in the difficult art of peace-making."

"I am all for peace," said the Governor hastily; "and it may be we can take up the matter anew."

"The time for that is gone by," Captain Pratt protested. "I have seen something of that coadjutor of the evil one, who appears to exercise authority here, and I have conceived a great misliking for his character and conduct."

"If the Bishop has mishandled this affair, it will be legitimate ground of complaint against him," said the Governor with a glee which he ill concealed, and a desire to throw upon him the failure of the negotiations.

"I am not accustomed to a constraint of my actions by any other than lawful authority," Captain Pratt protested. "There seems to be here a divided authority, and I have no mind to undertake a needless risk."

"You are safe under my protection," said the Governor loftily.

"Then I am glad to know where I stand. I am given to believe that this prelate has undertaken to issue his foolish warrant for my detention."

"You stand upon the rock of the king of France, whom I am honoured to serve, and obey."

"Do not think," said Captain Pratt sincerely, "that I seek any protection beyond what I have provided for myself. Yet I would take it kindly if you were to see to it that this prelate keeps his fingers from my throat."

"May I remind you," said the Governor more coldly, "that I am not yet informed of your name or quality."

"My name is Phineas Pratt. My quality is Commander of the Covenant."

"We are two men of affairs," said the Governor with much respect, when he heard the name, "and shall, I trust, go our different ways as peaceably as may be."

"That is my single desire," Captain Pratt protested with equal cordiality.

"How then may I serve you?"

"We seek conveyance hence, as speedily as may suit your convenience."

"I lament that I have no transport to offer," said the Governor in some confusion.

"I am aware that your ship should be full, by this time of the season and that beaver skins are both scarce and dear. I should hesitate to disturb your private arrangements; but I have also a private adventure of trade in the foggy waters of the Gulf, which you will admit is a convenient location for the same."

"There is no reason why our interests should clash," the Governor protested eagerly.

"Then we shall take passage in your ship, and I believe that I shall be a profitable passenger."

"The Hirondelle sails with the turn of the tide."

"I shall thank you for your warrant."

"You shall have it by midnight at the water's edge."

The two men arose and saluted each other with much gravity, as when a bargain is struck, which is profitable to both.

"There is something further," I objected. "We are not alone. We have in our company a woman whom we have rescued in the forest."

"A warrant shall also be prepared for her safe trans-

port," said the Governor, with the air of a man who desires to be rid of a troublesome business.

"It may require a file of soldiers to execute it," Captain Pratt suggested, as if he were giving a bit of advice.

"In whose name does her ownership lie," the Governor demanded.

"That is where some difficulty may arise," Captain Pratt allowed. "Of mere good nature I permitted Father Janselme to recompense the Iroquois who first found her wandering in the forest, and she is now under the care of Marie of the Ursulines."

"This is a serious affair," cried the Governor with a frown of perplexity upon his face. "My instructions are strict upon this head; and to break into a convent of women would create a scandal which even I could not down."

"But she is my wife," I cried in alarm at the gravity of the Governor's mien. It meant nothing to me that we had a warrant for our transportation, if Beatrix were left behind. Captain Pratt looked at me, his face transfigured with admiration.

"This makes the situation doubly difficult," the Governor reflected, with signs of deep thought. "It passes my understanding how to deal with so intricate an affair. She is a ward of the king. I shall not undertake to decide. To the king she shall go in the Hirondelle," he concluded with the air of a man who forms a desperate resolution.

"That arrangement presents many attractions," said I.
"Then," said the Governor, "we shall all meet at
the quay sometime before midnight," and we parted

with great cordiality. When we were alone again in the street Captain Pratt was merry at my expense. "A lie," said he, "is an ever present help in time of

need."

"It was no lie; Beatrix is in very truth my wife."
"Adhere to that," he urged; "they cannot prove the contrary by me, and that will be the Governor's excuse for breaking into a convent of women." I protested again, but Captain Pratt merely praised me for my ready wit, and so I was compelled to leave the matter at that.

Sometime before midnight we found the Governor and his guards at the quay with Beatrix standing in the midst. The Ursulines had used her well. The stains of travel were removed; and for her serviceable garments they had exchanged a gown of lighter fabric, and more pleasing cut. Our Beatrix of the forest had vanished; and in her stead appeared the daughter of the rich house in Lombard Street. Captain Pratt raised her hand to his lips with a refinement of respect, as if he were the greatest courtier in the world. We presented her to the Governor, and that great official became gallant.

"This is one of my many services to his Majesty," he said, "sending to him so adorable a ward." Beatrix took the matter as a bit of play, and made as light a speech in reply.

A boat with four stout rowers was waiting at the quay. The Governor handed the warrants to Captain Pratt, and he in turn submitted them to me for examination by the light of a lantern. They were duly drawn, and directed the master of the *Hirondelle* to receive the passengers named therein, and transport

them over-seas. The Governor said farewell. We took our places in the boat, and pushed out into the stream. In silence we rowed down the river; and, in the darkness, and nearness, Beatrix became Beatrix of the forest once more.

We gained the shelter of a large island, and skirted its northerly bank till morning broke, and we saw a small bark riding at anchor upon the full tide. Captain Pratt hailed the deck. The crew were alert, and the shipmaster advanced to the side to receive his warrants. They seemed to please him well, and he invited us on board. He conducted Beatrix to a cabin which stood by itself, and using her with much politeness, he placed a sentry at the door.

The capstans were manned. The anchors were heaved up, to the accompaniment of an uncouth song; and Captain Pratt made many judicious observations upon the government of a ship in the French tongue.

When Beatrix came upon the deck, we were already slipping down the river with the wind and tide, and together we watched the white clouds of mist which lay upon the azure hills.

The Hirondelle was a very slug in respect of speed, and Captain Pratt likened it to those ships which you have seen impressed upon a Dutch coin. The voyage was slow, and the river long; but if it flowed into the sea of forgetfulness, neither Beatrix nor I would have made complaint. We had no perception of the passing of the day, until night warned us that it was time for her to go to her solitary rest, from which she would emerge in the morning with a new radiance.

I pause here to say that upon several occasions,

when I was abroad in the exercise of war, I saw in the sky most exquisite spectacles, if shapen by heavenly hands, or caught up from earth, I know not. Now that I am old, and my days of seeing and doing are over. I have but to look into my own heart, and there do I see a mirage of the best and the loveliest, which ever came into a man's life. Oftentimes in the night, whether sleeping or waking I cannot tell either, there comes to me the cloudy outline of a gray figure, the rippling hair moist with the evening mists, calm eyes filled with the evening light. As I grow older the vision arises the oftener, and at times I have speech with it. Indeed this simulacrum has come to be the reality more real than those long spring-time days in the forest, in the canoe upon the still lakes, or in the foreign ship upon the flowing river.

The noble river was ever widening out into a nobler sea, with the horizon upon each side lying upon its waters. Gone were the blue hills, and the glory of the Canadian summer on their slopes. Past were the green points, and cliffs, and rugged coast. We were now in the wider estuary of the St. Lawrence, where the tide was swallowed up by the sea. Captain Pratt did nothing but watch. He would search the horizon, standing by the rail as immovable as a graven image peering into the future.

At high noon, as the master was taking the sun, Captain Pratt asked for a sight of his glass. They laboured over their figures like two astrologers, and thereafter Captain Pratt became more intent upon his vigil. Of a sudden he started, as if he had seen a spectre; and he called me to his side.

"Cast your eye along the lee," he said, "and tell me what you observe."

"A waste of water, and a misty sky."

"Does not the fog take the shape of a tower of sail? Fetch me the perspective glass, if this ill-found ship possess such an instrument." I did as I was bidden, and put the glass in his hand. He regarded long and fixedly; and what he saw appeared to cause him great satisfaction. When he was fully content, he passed the instrument to me, and directed me where to level it. In the meantime Beatrix joined us, where I stood with legs wide-spread, earnestly regarding the sea-girt sky, as if I were an admiral of the fleet. I could see nothing but the tumbling water or the vacant sky. Suddenly a ship leaped into the field, hung for a moment, and sunk again. Then it rose slowly, and I transfixed it with my gaze.

"This is the Covenant," I cried in wonder. "I see the hand of God."

"I see the hand of Hugh Cornish," said Captain Pratt, and gave the glass to Beatrix. After some instruction she also was able to make out the stranger which was approaching with a better wind than ours. The shipmaster was attracted by the commotion, and when he joined us the Covenant was in full view tearing to meet us with frothing bows. He thrust his hand in his hair, and demanded to know what this stranger meant; but I reassured him by saying that we were friends. The Covenant fired a shot athwart our foot.

"That is a voice which I know," cried Captain Pratt. "It is sweet in my ears; but Hugh Cornish will be a disappointed man to-day."

The Hirondelle hove to. The Covenant launched a boat. Beatrix and I stood at the rail, watching the stern faces of the men as they came alongside. Captain Pratt had a merry visage, and we could scarce hold our countenances from laughter, as we thought of the surprise which was in store for our old companions. Hugh Cornish lifted up his eyes; and, when he caught sight of us, he inflated his chest, and lifted up his voice. "Truly, it was a sterile task," he cried, "watching and warding in these tumultuous seas, when you have already done the work."

"You will have three good passengers for your pains," Captain Pratt called down from the rail.

"And the Covenant will accommodate, at least, a portion of the cargo; though she is not over profitable for stowage, and is now fairly full."

"But there are no goods to bestow."

"What gipsy trick is this? Surely you have lost your cunning, if you have not made the deck on which you stand your own."

"I have found our brave companion, Captain Dexter."

"I make no complaint of him; but beaver skins are both scarce and dear."

"This is but a cold welcome," I said, leading Beatrix to the rail. When he saw the fair face beside me, he became gracious.

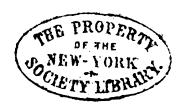
"We can do very well without the beaver skins," he said.

We bade farewell to the master of the *Hirondelle*, and went over the side. As Beatrix went down she put her hand in Hugh Cornish's, as if for support; and the honest fellow all but fell into the sea with confusion.

Willing arms pulled us across the water, and soon we stood upon the *Covenant's* deck. Captain Pratt cast his eye inboard and outboard, alow and aloft. Christopher Lea and Richard Thorpe took me to a secret place, and there I had a few hurried expressions of their opinion upon savage warfare.

"Clear the decks." Captain Pratt's great voice from his own quarter-deck brought the crew tumbling to their places. When I found my station by his side, Beatrix was already there. The guns were run out, the boats heaved down, and the men stood at attention. Captain Pratt left us for a moment, and entered his cabin. Presently he returned, wearing a blue coat with gold buttons, and a pointed hat upon his head. He joined our hands.

"If you ask: 'Who gives this woman away?' I say: 'I do.' Who has a better right? She is my own child. And in virtue of the authority committed into my hands, as an Admiral of the Fleet, under the seal of the Lord Protector, and registered in the court of Admirals, I join these two in the bonds of wedlock. Blow your matches." And the guns of the Covenant declared to the world that I had found the desire of my heart.



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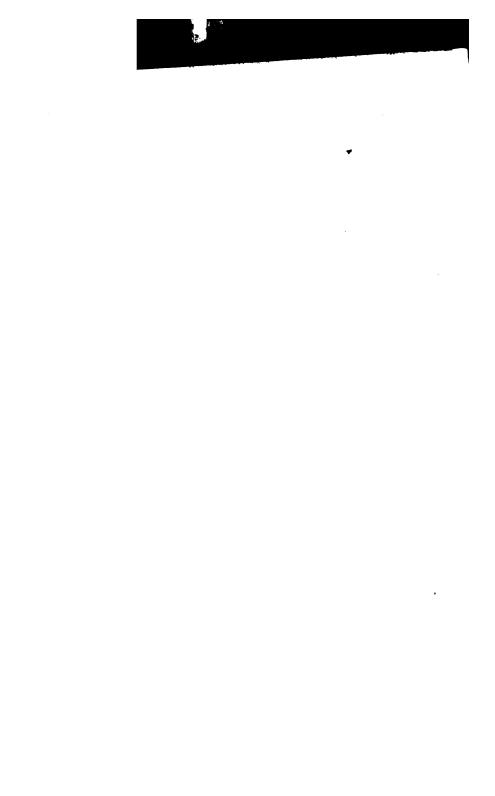
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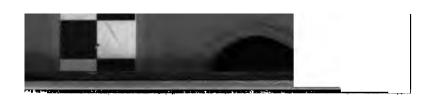
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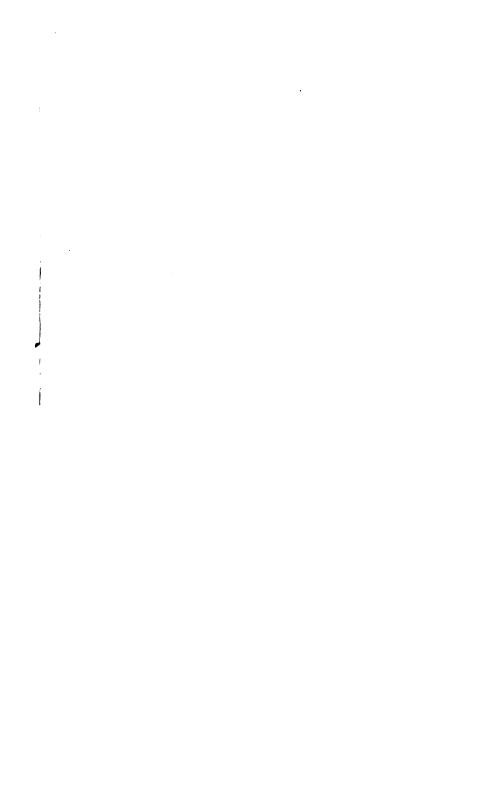
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